THE NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS
BENGALURU • MONDAY • MAY 06, 2024 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION

SIZZLING JAMMU

Tourists seeking relief from a hot summer day take a bath in a river in Jhajjar Kotli, on the outskirts of Jammu on Sunday. Mercury hit a high of 37 degrees Celsius in Jhajjar Kotli during the day. Coming days are expected to be warmer with a forecast showing 40 degrees Celsius on Wednesday | PTI

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WATER SHORTAGE HITS INDUSTRIES, WORKERS IN PEENYA

BWSSB, however, says there's no such crisis

RISHITA KHANNA @ Bengaluru

AMID a severe water crisis, migrant workers in Peenya, one of the largest industrial areas in Bengaluru, are struggling to access drinking water. The area, which was receiving Cauvery water every alternative day, now gets drinking water only twice a month. BWSSB, however, said they are providing drinking water every alternative day. While BWSSB is supplying treated water to industries at an affordable rate, industrialists question why the area, which accommodates approximately 16,000 industries, lacks borewells.

Shivakumar R, president-elect of Peenya Industries Association (PIA), said, "Workers are encountering challenges in accessing drinking water. Previously, water was supplied every alternate day, and labourers used to store water and utilize it. However, water is now supplied only twice a month. Where do the migrants go, how can they afford to pay for tankers and for how long can they sustain this?" Shivakumar questioned. Why did the authorities overlook drilling of borewells in one of the largest industrial areas, while almost all residential complexes have them, he pointed out.

He also emphasized that the government, through BBMP, should provide 100% subsidy on rainwater harvesting and that most lakes lack compounds and boundaries, leading to wastage. "The construction of boundaries around lakes has to be done in summers, so during rain, water can be retained, but the authorities have not done it despite several reminders," he added.

Another official said disrupting water supply would jeopardize the livelihoods of over 12 lakh workers, the majority of whom work for sectors like electronics, automobiles, packaging, garments, lubricants, consumer goods and pharmaceuticals. Industries have insufficient water and even workers are struggling with limited water, he said.

With the worsening water crisis in the city, the water board has decreased supply to commercial and industrial sectors to ensure adequate water for residential sections. If the situation persists, production costs will rise, the official said.

> With temperatures soaring, drinking water becomes essential, particularly for labourers who often work with machinery in humid conditions
>
> Jameel, owner of packaging unit

The workers highlighted that with their daily wages, it is expensive to buy drinking water. "With temperatures soaring, drinking water becomes essential, particularly for labourers who often work with machinery in humid conditions," said Jameel, owner of a packaging industry.

Saleem, a native of Kalaburagi said, "Many of us in the garment sector require water for processing. The government has proposed sourcing recycled water, but the tendering process means we may not receive water this season at the current rate of progress."

BWSSB Chairman Ram Prasath Manohar denied that such a water problem exists in the area, and said they have not received any complaints. "We are supplying drinking water every alternative day," he added.

Students make last-minute checks outside an NEET centre at Jain College in Bengaluru on Sunday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

NEET-UG held at 29 centres in Karnataka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test for admission to under-graduate medical courses was held at 29 district centres across the state, including Bengaluru, between 2 pm and 5 pm on Sunday. As many as 1.49 lakh candidates had enrolled for the test.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) conducted the tests in 13 languages across the country, including Kannada, but very few opted for it.

This year, the test was conducted smoothly in 557 cities in India and 14 cities abroad. More than 24 lakh students registered for NEET to secure one lakh MBBS seats.

After the test, some students took to social media and claimed that the question paper was leaked, but NTA dismissed all the allegations. In an official statement, the agency said apart from one isolated incident in Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan, the tests were conducted smoothly in all other centres.

The answer key will be available on the NTA website -- exams.nta.ac.in/NEET/ -- in a few days. Experts said students found the physics and biology papers to be lengthy, and while the biology paper was easy, the chemistry paper proved difficult.

Commuters risk life and limb to cross road at Nallurhalli Metro Station

S LALITHA @ Bengaluru

WITH one half of the main carriageway below Nallurhalli Metro Station on the extended Purple Line closed for over two months now to rectify an issue at the station, commuters are forced to risk life and limb to cross the road at one entrance. Commuters going to and from 'A' entrance of the station make a dash in the face of speeding incoming vehicles.

With Metro work going on, the EPIP Road running to a length of 250metres and width of 25feet is barricaded on both ends, in the direction from Graphite India towards Vaidehi Circle. With this road shut, those emerging from 'A' exit reach the service road, located along GE Health Care.

BMRCL MD M Maheshwar Rao told TNIE, "A truss erection has been done at the spot to bridge a gap at Nallurhalli station. Hence, half the road below the station is blocked. Work will be completed here shortly. We will review it and try to advance the timeline."

From left: Half of the carriageway under the Metro station is blocked to rectify a gap in the station. Commuters dash in the face of speeding vehicles | EXPRESS

Meanwhile, watching commuters cross the road is a trying affair. At the corner is a curve which makes it difficult for approaching vehicles to see pedestrians a few feet ahead. Adding to the risk is a road that joins it at the spot (referred to locally as the Neil Rao Tower Road) from where vehicles surge ahead and join the service road, posing a danger to vehicle users and pedestrians.

On Sunday evening, Mary Jacob was spotted making a dash across the service road with her son Aman Isac to enter Nallurhalli station. Isac told TNIE, "My mother was almost hit by a car when she was crossing. Just look at the bend there. It's a very big hazard."

Mary added, "We came to Nallurhalli area in the morning and had to wait for long to cross over from the station to the road. It is as if the station has just sprung up in the middle of a road and public are stuck. I was actually shocked we had to get out of a station in such a risky manner."

IT professional Lokesh M said, "I have to run and cross even as vehicles are approaching. If we wait, we will never be able to cross."

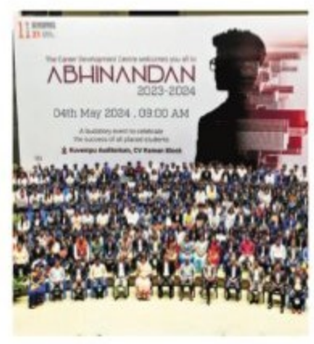
Nagaraj, an employee at 'Liquor Library' located across the road says, "Our business is suffering due to the lack of parking space now, as the service road has become the main road. Even buses are going past very fast. Even if one car is parked here, there is a big traffic jam."

'Whitefield Rising', a citizens' movement based in Whitefield, in a post on X recently drew attention to this issue.

EXPRESS READ

TGMC Bank earns gross profit of Rs 69.17 cr

Bengaluru: The Tumkur Grain Merchant's Cooperative Bank has logged a gross profit of Rs 69.17 crore for the financial year 2023-24. The bank has clipped the net non-performing assets (NNPA) at 4.75% for the said period. It also reported deposits of Rs 1,465.50 crore while loans and advances stood at Rs 1,023.53 crore. Besides, the bank achieved net owned funds of Rs 328 crore during the financial year, stated a press release issued by Suresh J, Chief Executive Officer of the bank. ENS



3k+ REVA students got placements this yr

Bengaluru: REVA University on Saturday organised 'Abhinandan-2024', a programme to felicitate students who secured placements in various companies. This year, over 3,006 students of the university got placements. The event was organised by the university's Career Development Centre. Chancellor Dr P Shyama Raju pledged to nurture the next generation of students to become capable and industry-ready, following in the footsteps of their accomplished predecessors. Highlighting the pivotal role played by external stakeholders, the chancellor extended gratitude to all the recruiters for flagging REVA for their talent hunt. ENS

Only 3% of women entrepreneurs get funding in India, finds report

PURAN CHOUDHARY
@Bengaluru

ONLY three per cent of women entrepreneurs in Tier 2 and 3 cities in India have access to external funding such as bank loans or equity investments, to start or expand their businesses, according to a white paper published by the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH), in collaboration with SALTmysaltapp. The paper highlighted the perils of women entrepreneurs and lack of a level playing field in the industry.

Titled 'At the Helm: Women Entrepreneurs Transforming Middle India', was aimed at understanding the complex socio-economic dynamics affecting women's entrepreneurship in Middle India, defined as Tier 2 and 3 cities. The study was conducted with the participation of 300 women across 30 cities, with a focus on businesses with a track record of at least three years and employing more than 10 people. In all cases, the women interviewed were either founders themselves, or playing a full-time, decision-making role in the family business.

The paper found a severe information gap due to the lack of gender-disaggregated data. This becomes crucial to counter stereotypes, create interest in this segment and make effective policy interventions based on data. The study noted that given the country's achievements in high STEM and post-graduate education for girls, this trend is baffling.

> In addition to being groomed locally, female talent also moves into these cities as part of marriage-related migration. As more women acquire higher education, they are ready to consider entrepreneurial careers which need to be encouraged — Report

Optimistically, the paper found that the sample is a diverse batch of educated women entrepreneurs with 14% holding graduate degrees and 55% having pursued higher education, indicating a wide range of professional backgrounds. However, due to many other responsibilities, many entrepreneurs are between the age group of 30 and 60 years, underscoring that women have late success.

"There is also a noticeable trend that cities deemed safer for women see a higher propensity for them to take entrepreneurial risks and establish businesses. Enhancing women's safety can directly contribute to fostering a more vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem," suggested the 52-page report.

There is an urgent need to address and create gender-responsive policies for Tier-2 and 3 cities which includes education, capital, skill development and strong community networks convergence for an inclusive and prosperous entrepreneurial landscape in the country.

"Fostering female entrepreneurship in Tier 2 cities can be a gamechanger. The ecosystem is primed, and the diverse range of businesses women are currently running shows promise. In addition to being groomed locally, female talent also moves into these cities as part of marriage-related migration. As more women acquire higher education, they are ready to consider entrepreneurial careers which need to be encouraged," concluded the report.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

06TH May : Mercury, planet of bright ideas, is still in a sober, serious zone. It follows that the dominant style in all communications should be conservative and traditional, and that raw passion and wild behaviour must be put on one side for a few days. That's the theory, at any rate!

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
The general planetary position is now looking increasingly relaxed, so you may begin to drop one or two unwanted commitments. Your interests in current or topical affairs should continue to exert quite an influence on your plans, perhaps because you'll want to be a part of what's happening

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
Developments on the emotional or romantic fronts still seem to be veiled in secrecy. Perhaps it is you who are unable to reveal your feelings, but it could equally be partners who are being a little coy. At any rate, those underlying desires need to be gently teased out.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
At work you must still press ahead. Even though there is some time left, the opportunities to put a professional scheme into practice are diminishing. This is therefore no time to dither if your ambitions are on the line. Remember - life is not a rehearsal!

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
The general pattern in your solar chart indicates that there is still no time like the present for pursuing lifelong ambitions. Forget that you were born under a sensitive sign and aim for the top. But there's one important word of advice: leave nothing to chance.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
Life still looks quite expensive. However, the time is rapidly approaching when you will be able to cease worrying about other people's money and security, and focus on your own. After all, when the chips are down, only you can really help yourself. And once you're better off, you'll be more use to others.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
The golden rule over the next forty-eight hours will be to listen to partners' advice. Even if they are apparently talking nonsense, you should smile intelligently and look interested. Amidst the ninety-nine which are irrelevant, there may be a one per cent nugget of pure, golden truth.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
Keep yourself busy, but also pay a little extra attention to your physical well-being. This is actually that time of the month when it's auspicious for you to sort out your exercise regime and rearrange your diet. The first step is to make sure that you pace yourself, balancing hard work with serious relaxation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
Have yourself an enjoyable day. You may be obliged to work or perform burdensome routine tasks but, even so, with just a slight change of attitude you can realise that what you are doing has a positive side. You need to base your initiatives and actions on firm foundations, so walk before you run.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
Home and domestic affairs will almost inevitably intrude on your life more than you would wish. Probably the best thing you can do is cheerfully devote extra time and attention wherever required. There's no point in sticking your head in the sand, or being resentful.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
You are soon to receive another boost from magical Mercury. See this as a period for fresh ideas, conjuring up new dreams and letting your imagination lead you to the future. Ask other people about their plans, and see if there's anything you can imitate!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
It's a day for handling money, and that means spending it as well as earning it. Your most extra-vagant and unrestrained planetary alignments are not due just yet, so you should end up in profit. On the other hand, a family member's plea for extra cash may be irresistible!

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
The ball is in your court today, so no ducking your responsibilities. You may be a little more sensitive than usual, but if you have taken care to grow a thicker skin, you'll survive! If you have an asset at the moment, it's your ability to look below the surface and see what's really happening.

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle ⬇

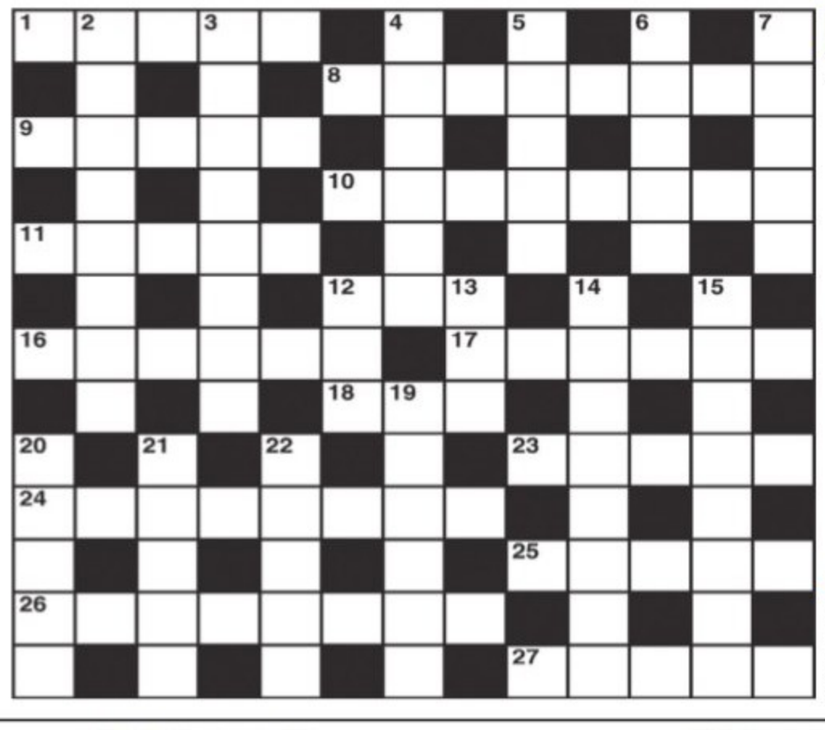
				6	8			7
		1		2	7			6
	7				4	8		
							6	1
6		5				2		3
1	3							
		3	4				5	
9			1	7		4		
4			8	3				

7	8	6	5	9	3	1	2	4
4	9	5	1	2	7	3	8	6
3	2	1	8	4	6	5	7	9
8	1	9	6	3	2	4	5	7
2	3	7	4	8	5	9	6	1
6	5	4	7	1	9	2	3	8
9	6	3	2	7	1	8	4	5
1	7	8	3	5	4	6	9	2
5	4	2	9	6	8	7	1	3

SUDOKU HARD

TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



CROSS WORD

ACROSS
1 Bound to be shifty (5)
8 Two cutlets at once (4,4)
9 Isn't it still being eaten? (5)
10 Could mean coming in last, everything considered (5,3)
11 A defamation one may study microscopically (5)
12 A ship that carries goods overland (3)
16 Publicly declared to be worth nothing? (6)
17 Instructed to get soundly tight (6)
18 Wine may be so, but not water (3)
23 Restrict getting electrical power by credit (5)
24 Music that may take longer if cut short (8)
25 Sail Columbus raised here (5)
26 Unexpected but fruitful result of a sharp blow (8)
27 Turns out OK as a second city of Japan (5)

DOWN
2 Always increasing? (8)
3 Men of fashion annoy social workers (8)
4 Changes of clothing (6)
5 Spots or moles (5)
6 Penny each perhaps? (5)
7 Upset to make light of (5)
12 Sum up a cleric (3)
13 Litter depositary (3)
14 NEWS rooms (8)
15 Counterfeit diamond plant (8)
19 What a snake may do to make one nervous (6)
20 Lower point on a chimney cover (5)
21 Silly Annie gets confused (5)
22 Shortens sail seeing dangerous rocks (5)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Willy-nilly, 6 Anew, 10 Label, 11 Interject, 12 Brisbane, 13 Miser, 15 Artiste, 17 Situate, 19 Reduced, 21 Tornado, 22 Nylon, 24 Salvaged, 27 In the main, 28 Siena, 29 Garb, 30 Crosspatch.

Down: 1 Well, 2 Liberated, 3 Yells, 4 Imitate, 5 Letters, 7 Needs, 8 Watermelon, 9 Prompter, 14 Warranting, 16 Seconded, 18 Abasement, 20 Despair, 21 Talents, 23 Later, 25 Aesop, 26 Gash.

JUMBLE

UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.

BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

TURET

SLEBS

RIDHOA

BICERS

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

"____" (Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: VENOM ICIER GENTRY FOSSIL
Answer: The tennis pro at the club was fed up with his job and planned to — SERVE NOTICE

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CAN'T END WAR NOW AS IT WILL KEEP HAMAS IN POWER, SAYS ISRAELI PM

Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel is willing to temporarily pause fighting to secure the release of hostages held in Gaza by the militant group

CAIRO TALKS END; RAFAH OPS SOON, SAYS ISRAEL

Netanyahu's remarks come as the Egypt-brokered talks in Cairo wrapped up without any remarkable progress. Hamas reiterated its demand that Israel end war and pull troops out of Gaza. Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant accused the group of not being serious about reaching a truce deal and said Israel will launch its ground offensive in Rafah in the "very near future" | P11

ISRAELI CABINET VOTES TO CLOSE AL JAZEERA

- Israeli government shut down Qatar-based news channel Al Jazeera's offices in Israel on Sunday. Netanyahu said, "There will be no freedom of speech for the Hamas trumpets in Israel"
- Al Jazeera has aired continuous reportage on the effects of Gaza war. The network slammed Israel's action as "supression of press freedom"

45 DAYS

DURATION OF AL JAZEERA'S SUSPENSION, WHICH IS LIKELY TO BE EXTENDED

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Prajwal was to arrive from Dubai? SIT draws a blank

The JDS leader seems to be changing places abroad, say officials

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

BASED on strong tip-offs indicating that Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, who is wanted in sexual harassment cases, might arrive in Bengaluru from Dubai, the officials of the Special Investigation Team (SIT), formed to probe the case, camped at the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru for hours on Sunday before returning empty-handed.

Police sources said the SIT received credible information that the Janata Dal (Secular) MP would arrive anytime on Sunday and the SIT officials were all prepared to take him into custody as soon as he landed at the airport. It is learnt that the investigation agency got strong leads that the MP, who was believed to be in Germany, kept changing places and had moved to Dubai, from where he had booked a flight to Bengaluru.

Following the information, a team of SIT officials arrived at KIA and camped there from 1 pm on Sunday. The police officials were monitoring the status of the flight, in which the MP had purportedly booked a seat. But there was no sign of the MP alighting even after the said flight landed. After waiting for hours, the SIT officials left the airport in the night.

SIT officers take JDS MLA HD Revanna inside Bowring Hospital for a medical check-up, in Bengaluru on Sunday | EXPRESS

Though Bengaluru has direct flights from Dubai, the SIT had alerted immigration officials at other airports across the country to keep track of arrivals from the Gulf. "There was also suspicion that he could opt for another flight and land at some other airport at the last moment. That was the reason this step was taken," an official explained.

Though most members of the SIT returned, some officials are still stationed at the airport to check on later arrivals from Dubai. Since the MP is still on the run, the SIT has continued their probe to find out where he is. Meanwhile, Karnataka Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara confirmed that the SIT had sought the assistance of the Interpol, through which a Blue Corner Notice was issued against Prajwal Revanna on Sunday. P4

Govt in talks to bring Kenyan cheetahs to MP

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

WITH Project Cheetah facing criticism after seven cheetahs brought to India from Namibia and South Africa died at Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park, the Centre is in talks with the Kenyan government to bring a fresh batch of cheetahs to the country, this time a different 'sub-species'.

As per sources, the government is making arrangements, including fencing 80 sq km of land at Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary and Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh to house East African cheetahs, known scientifically as *acinonyx jubatus raineyi*. They are different from *acinonyx jubatus jubatus* or the South African cheetahs that were brought to India from South Africa and Namibia.

However, experts have raised concerns. They point to the government's Cheetah Action Plan (CAP) which underlines that cheetahs from South Africa and Namibia are best suited for transport and re-introduction to habitats in India rather than other cheetah subspecies.

They say the CAP has no mention of the landscape required for free-ranging cheetahs. Arjun Gopalswamy, a wildlife and statistical ecologist, said CAP overestimated the carrying capacity of free-ranging cheetahs in Kuno. He added that an iconic, prey-rich ecosystem like Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya, harbours only 18-24 cheetahs over 2400 sq km. Kuno National Park has an area of 750 sq km.

There is also fear of mixing up two sub-species on the same landscape. "I fear Madhya Pradesh's similar landscape would increase the chance of mixing up the two species as Kuno's Cheetahs keep straying out regularly and cover a long distance to reach other forests," he said.

In my opinion, the government should stick to one sub-species until south African countries refuse to give any more cheetahs

MK Ranjitsinh Jhala, wildlife conservationist

Cong files plaint against Nadda, Malviya

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

CONGRESS on Sunday filed a complaint with the High Grounds police station in Bengaluru and also approached the Election Commission of India against BJP, accusing it of intimidating SC/STs and OBCs through an animated video, in which it has projected the Grand Old Party as favouring Muslims at the cost of these communities. The video was uploaded on BJP state social media handles.

Congress alleged that the saffron party has used the video to create enmity between religions and to garner votes from one community ahead of polling in 14 Lok Sabha constituencies on Tuesday.

Congress held BJP national president JP Nadda, national social media in-charge Amit Malviya, state BJP president BY Vijayendra and the Karnataka social media in-charge as guilty.

"It is intimidating members of Schedule Caste or Tribe to not vote for a particular candidate with an intention to create feelings of enmity, hatred and ill-will against members of SC/ST community and violating model code of conduct (MCC) by using an animated video by portraying Congress as favouring a particular religion and suppressing members of SC/ST and OBC communities," it alleged.

In the video, animated characters of Rahul Gandhi and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, SC/STs and OBC communities are shown as "eggs" in a basket. Rahul plants another egg, representing the Muslim community, in the basket. After the eggs hatch, the chicken that represents the Muslim community gets fed from Rahul, grows big and kicks out SC, ST and OBC community chickens from the basket, the complaint explained.

FIGHT WITH HUBBY

Woman throws her six-year-old speech-impaired son to crocodiles

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS
@ Dandeli (Uttara Kannada)

AFTER a fight with her husband, a woman from a village near Dandeli threw her six-year-old, speech-impaired son into a canal filled with crocodiles on Saturday night.

The child's parents, Ravi Kumar Shelle and Savitri, who live in a rented house, had a heated argument late on Saturday night over the condition of their specially-abled child, identified as **Vinod**. A frustrated Savitri picked up their son who was sleeping and threw him into a nearby canal that is infested with crocodiles.

But when she returned home and better sense prevailed, she raised an alarm calling for help. "I threw my child into the waters. Please help him," she is seen screaming in a video footage that has gone viral.

The neighbours immediately started searching for Vinod, hoping that he could be rescued if he was still alive. Some people also alerted the Dandeli Rural police station.

Police officials and the rescue team from the fire and emergency department along with divers arrived on the scene and started searching for the child. "Initially, we thought the child might have fallen in the middle of thick tree cover. But we could not trace the boy. We then realised that she might have thrown him directly into the canal," a villager said. "We could see one of the crocodiles holding the body in its mouth," said Santosh, an eyewitness. Parts of the boy's body were found on Sunday morning after rescue teams resumed the search operation.

The police said the couple fought regularly as the husband had a deep dissatisfaction over Vinod's condition. On Saturday night too, the argument was over the same issue that led to the murder of the boy. Savitri told the police that her husband would always say about the child, "Of what use he is. He just keeps on eating. Throw him somewhere else. Let him die."

A case of murder has been booked against the couple.

EXPRESS READ

Channi calls attack on IAF's convoy 'stunt'

Chandigarh: Former Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi on Sunday called the Poonch terror attack in which an IAF personnel was killed and four were injured, a stunt meant to make the BJP win the Lok Sabha polls. The statement was slammed by the BJP.

WB Guv asks Raj Bhavan staff to ignore summons

Kolkata: West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Sunday told Raj Bhavan staffers to ignore any communication from the Kolkata Police, with regard to a woman employee's molestation plaint against him. The direction comes after a team was formed to probe into her allegations against him.

MODI EVERYWHERE

People throng Prime Minister Narendra Modi's roadshow in Ayodhya on Sunday. This was his first visit to the holy town since the consecration of the Ram Mandir on January 22 | PTI

PM Modi speaking like Bajrang activist: Siddu

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Belagavi

"PRIME Minister Narendra Modi is afraid of losing the Lok Sabha election, and is making statements like a Bajrang Dal activist," Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said here on Sunday. "Modi says the Constitution is their 'Dharma Granth', whereas his MP candidates and close associates are speaking about changing the Constitution and removing reservation for SC/STs and OBCs. They are internally different but present themselves as secular. This election is a second freedom fight," he declared.

At a press conference in Belagavi on Sunday, Siddaramaiah alleged that during his campaign, Modi never speaks about his achievements in the past ten years as there are no achievement. "He worked to communalize and divide society on the basis of caste and religion. Rahul Gandhi started a padayatra across the country to reunite people and understand their problems, and prepared a manifesto with 25 guarantee schemes for the betterment of the poor, farmers and labourers," he said.

Claiming that his government had implemented the guarantee schemes immediately after taking charge, he said the Congress had fulfilled all its promises. "People of the state believe in the Congress government, we spent Rs 36,000 crore on guarantees in a year. The BJP spread lies that the treasury would become empty, and the schemes will stop after the Lok Sabha elections. About Rs 56,000 crore is required for the guarantees and we have already reserved Rs 52,000 crore for them, and Rs 62,000 crore for development works for 2024-25. But BJP doesn't like guarantee schemes, as they don't like farmers, the poor and labourers," he alleged. P4

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah waves at the crowd during a campaign rally in Honnali, Davanagere district, on Sunday

After water, beer shortage stares at Bengaluru

RISHITA KHANNA @ Bengaluru

AFTER water shortage, Bengalureans may soon face "beer shortage", as pubs and breweries in the city are struggling to keep up with the escalating demand, surpassing the available supply. While sales were on the rise in recent months, the continuous overproduction has left breweries with empty shelves. This scenario, in turn, has caused delays in restocking inventories for retail stores.

In response to the current situation, many pubs and breweries are set to soon discontinue weekend offers, such as buy 2 get 1 and buy 1 get 1 on pitchers. The increase in demand is not solely due to summer, manufacturers have also credited it to the fruit season and multiple long weekends during which people often prefer to meet over a beer.

A representative from a major breweries in Marathahalli said this year's supply and consumption have exceeded their expectations, for which they were unprepared. "Typically during the summer season, we introduce fruit-flavoured beer, with sales heavily reliant on fruits such as mangoes and pineapples. This year, sales of fruit beer dipped due to suboptimal mangoes, prompting people to opt for regular beer. The sales also continued to surge due to the heat, IPL season and the people coming in during long weekends." Approximately 30,000 litres have already been sold this year, compared to around 9,000 litres the previous year, he mentioned. The operational head of Gilly's Restobar said, "Sales have surged by 40% with nearly all customers choosing multiple beer orders over any other beverage. Managing the sales has become challenging due to delays in orders from breweries." P5

Dropped Hindutva leader may dent BJP's chances in Uttara Kannada

SUBHASH CHANDRA N S @ Karwar

UTTARA Kannada is a constituency that was comfortably in the BJP pocket for 27 years, represented as it was in the Lok Sabha by firebrand Hindutva leader Ananthkumar Hegde. In 2019, he won the seat by a margin of 4.79 lakh votes.

But controversy is his middle name. It often gets him into trouble though he manages to wriggle out on most occasions. Then came the blunder in the second week of March when the general election fever was gradually building up. He said the BJP's pitch for 400-plus Lok Sabha seats was to change the Constitution to promote Hinduism.

"Why does the BJP need 400+ seats? Congress leaders in the past made changes to the Constitution in a way that it doesn't put Hinduism in front. We need to change it and save our religion. We already have two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha, but not enough in the Rajya Sabha to amend the Constitution. 400+ will help us achieve that," he reportedly said.

That statement embarrassed the party brass, forced the BJP to disown it, and gave the Opposition the ammunition it was waiting for. Ever since, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and others have assured the nation that the statute wouldn't be disturbed, but the issue refuses to die down. And the BJP denied Hegde, 55, ticket and nominated former Assembly Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri instead. Hegde has gone into a deep sulk, which is hurting Kageri's chances.

SHOWTIME FOR GLADIATORS

ILLUSTRATION: MANDAR PARDIKAR

The Congress camp sees in the BJP's internal churn an opportunity for revival. Hoping to wrest the seat, it gave ticket to Dr Anjali Nimbalkar, a former MLA. She is the spouse of a senior IPS officer in Karnataka and niece of former Maharashtra chief minister Ashok Chavan, who is now with the BJP.

A medical practitioner by training, Dr Nimbalkar hails from Maharashtra. She won the Khanapur assembly seat in Belagavi district in 2018 but lost it in 2023.

Dr Nimbalkar is confident that the state government's guarantee schemes are vote catchers. She extensively uses social media to reach out to the people when she hits the campaign trail. The Congress is counting on the Ahinda, a Kannada acronym for minorities, OBCs, and SC/STs, who constitute 14.3%, 22.6% and 11.5%, respectively, of the total voting population of 12.48 lakh.

As for Kageri, he is a six-time MLA. However, his campaign has been rather sluggish. Hegde's inaction is another drag. Kageri is banking on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's charm offensive.

Would the scandal involving two leaders of its ally JDS be an X-factor? It's up to the voters to decide.

BENGAL

BJP PREZ CONFIDENT OF PARTY'S CHANCES

Speaking at Kolkata Dialogues, hosted by TNIE, Sukanta Majumdar said the state govt has failed to bring progress and BJP is the only alternative | P9

SIT issues Blue Corner Notice against Prajwal

Dr G says probe team coordinating with other countries to expand search

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

SHARING updates on the investigation into the alleged sexual crimes involving Hassan JDS MP Prajwal Revanna, Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara on Sunday said the Special Investigation Team (SIT) has issued a Blue Corner Notice against the current BJP-JDS alliance Hassan Lok Sabha candidate, who is the accused No. 2 in the alleged sex scandal.

The SIT is expected to take the help of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) to know Prajwal's whereabouts, and to zero in on him.

Speaking to reporters, Parameshwara said that he does not know where Prajwal is, however, the SIT officers will be aware, since they are tracking his movements. "I cannot reveal details like an SIT spokesperson," he said, reiterating that the SIT has already issued a Blue Corner Notice, and the search would proceed through INTERPOL help.

Sharing more details about the Blue Corner Notice issued against Prajwal, the home minister informed: "The SIT is coordinating with other countries in order to expand the search for Prajwal. The investigators will take a call on bringing him back."

Further, Parameshwara said that the arrest of former minister and JDS MLA HD Revanna might have hurt JDS workers and leaders. "However, one should not politicise the matter, and the SIT has done its job. If it had not arrested (Revanna), one might have alleged that the investigators are failing in their duty. We have instructed the SIT to work according to the law," he said.

Speaking about action against Revanna, the minister said he will be produced before a magistrate, and the procedures will be carried out in accordance with the law.

WHAT IS BLUE CORNER NOTICE?

BLUE NOTICE

One of INTERPOL's most important functions is to help police in its member countries share critical crime-related information using its system of international notices. Police can use INTERPOL notices to alert law enforcement in other countries of potential threats, or to ask for assistance in solving crimes. Accordingly, a Blue Corner Notice helps - To locate, identify or obtain information on a person of interest in a criminal investigation. Source: INTERPOL

SIT officers accompany JDS Holenarasipur MLA HD Revanna, while producing him before a magistrate in Bengaluru on Sunday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

Nikhil, HDK to visit Hassan to pep up party workers

BENGALURU: Hassan JDS MP Prajwal Revanna's alleged sex scandal has appeared to widen the rift between the families of the two brothers -- former chief minister HD Kumaraswamy and Holenarsipura MLA HD Revanna, who was arrested on Saturday. Close on the heels of Kumaraswamy claiming that the two families are separate, his son Nikhil Kumaraswamy issued a similar statement. "I have nothing to do with Hassan. I hardly set foot in Hassan, and if I go, it's only for the Hasanamba festival. I have no contact with the Hassan MP," he told the media, without even mentioning Prajwal's name. Nikhil said JDS workers felt let down by the scandal, and he and his father would soon visit Hassan and boost their morale. Nikhil claimed he did not dare watch the sleazy videos, allegedly shot by Prajwal, and felt the case was sending the wrong message to the people of the state. "Especially when former PM Deve Gowda's life is an open book. Everyone knows how grandma Chennamma lived, and is a big inspiration for us. They have shown how a married couple should live together. Our grandmother is in great pain and worried how it will affect Deve Gowda," he remarked. He also rued that those who had released the pen drive had not blurred the faces of the victims, to keep their dignity intact.

Revanna remanded in SIT custody until Wednesday

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

FORMER minister, and Holenarasipura MLA HD Revanna, has been remanded in Special Investigation Team (SIT) custody for four days, until May 8, after the SIT officials informed the court that his custodial interrogation is required in the kidnap case registered against him.

The JDS MLA was arrested by the SIT on Saturday in connection with the kidnap of a woman, who reportedly appeared in one of the videos, after a court rejected his anticipatory bail plea. Revanna was produced before the magistrate of the 17th Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM), Ravindra Kattimani, at the latter's residence located in National Games Village in Koramangala on Sunday evening, around 7 pm. Security at the judge's residence was heightened, with the deployment of five inspectors and barricades were also set up.

The SIT sought police custody of the accused for five days, while Revanna's advocate Murthy D Naik objected, stating that his client has health issues and is cooperating with the investigation. Considering the SIT's request, the judge remanded the accused in police custody for four days.

Before producing him before the judge, the SIT took Revanna for a medical check-up at Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital, where the former minister asserted that his arrest, without evidence, was part of a political conspiracy. "In my 40-year political career, there have been no allegations against me," he stated, maintaining that the arrest was orchestrated as part of a "political conspiracy".

Revanna is one of the two accused named in a case filed in KR Nagar of Mysuru district. The complainant alleged that his mother was kidnapped to prevent her from approaching the police, regarding an alleged sexual assault by JDS MP and Revanna's son, Prajwal Revanna.

The initial case against him was related to an alleged sexual assault by him and Prajwal, filed on April 28 in Holenarasipura, Hassan district. Revanna argued that there was a lack of evidence in the case. "Subsequently, on May 2, a kidnapping case was filed due to the absence of evidence in the previous case," he alleged, while being taken to hospital for the check-up as part of the arrest procedure.

After the second round of examination, Dr Kemperaju, Medical Superintendent at Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical College and Research Institution, confirmed that Revanna's health is stable, and mentioned that he only has diabetes.

SIT sets up helpline

Meanwhile, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) has requested information from the public in the case. In a statement, SIT chief BK Singh stated that victims or informants requiring protection or legal aid, as well as assistance in the case, can reach out on the helpline at 63609 38947. The SIT assured the victims or informants that their identities would be kept confidential.

IF PRAJWAL WINS SEAT, NDA WILL TAKE ACTION AGAINST HIM: ASHOKA

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka at a press conference in Bengaluru on Sunday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka on Sunday said that if BJP-JDS alliance candidate for the Hassan Lok Sabha seat Prajwal Revanna wins, the NDA will take action against him. Further he mentioned: "One should know that previously, it was Siddaramaiah who played a role in Prajwal's victory the last time (2019 LS polls)." Meanwhile, Ashoka also alleged that the Congress government has taken money that was due to be paid to farmers, to compensate for the party's election expenses. "We demand the government to release the funds immediately," he said. Ashoka said the Congress government has not released compensatory funds to farmers, since it has utilised the money for its poll expenses and also for its guarantee schemes. He said the Congress is claiming to be "farmer-friendly" in the advertisements, but in reality, it is not releasing funds to farmers. "This is why compensation money is delayed," he added. Further, he said the government should have constituted a task force under district in-charge ministers to tackle water crisis, he said.

Attached to Kalaburagi: Kharge objects to BJP's remarks

RAMAKRISHNA BADSESHI
@ Kalaburagi

AICC president **Mallikarjun Kharge** strongly objected to the speeches of BJP leaders, questioning his (Kharge's) camping and touring in Kalaburagi district extensively.

Speaking to the media on Sunday, Kharge said, "Some leaders, including BJP candidate of Kalaburagi Dr Umesh Jadhav, used to object to my camping and extensive touring in Kalaburagi district, in their speeches. Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Kalaburagi district twice, many leaders of the BJP visited the constituency many times, and some RSS activists have been camping in the constituency for many days."

"Though this is the case, they are objecting about me. This (Kalaburagi district) is my 'karmabhoomi', its land and water are mine, I am attached to this land, which is natural. Knowing all these things, they are raising objections and you are questioning me," Kharge said.

Throughout the country, the atmosphere for the Congress and the I.N.D.I.A bloc is encouraging. The people have seen that the Congress' five guarantees given at the time of the Assembly elections in Karnataka have been successfully implemented and they have understood that the Grand Old Party keeps its promises, he stated.

The Congress has assured of implementing five Nyayas and 25 guarantees, if I.N.D.I.A bloc comes to power. "The I.N.D.I.A bloc will come to power this time, and the people will reject the NDA," he claimed.

Deputy Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa and his son and Shivamogga BJP candidate BY Raghavendra at a poll rally in Shivamogga on Sunday | EXPRESS

Congress swindled over ₹25k crore meant for SC, ST welfare, says BSY

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Shivamogga

FORMER chief minister BS Yediyurappa on Sunday accused the Congress of swindling funds kept for the welfare of backward communities, reiterating, "The Congress has swallowed Rs 25,396 crore worth of funds meant for the welfare of SC and ST communities."

Yediyurappa also charged that there are three factions within the Karnataka Congress -- led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, and KPCC president and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar. The Lingayat strongman told reporters here that the Grand Old Party will bite the dust in the polls, thanks to the infighting between its various factions.

He further claimed that former AICC president Rahul Gandhi chose to contest from Rae Bareli, after staring at defeat in Wayanad, further asserting that the latter will be defeated in both Wayanad and Rae Bareli this time around. "Rahul is migrating from one place to another due to the fear of losing in Wayanad. Firts, he fled to Wayanad, after he was getting defeated in Amethi in 2019. This time, he realised that he will not win there, and hence, chose to contest from Rae Bareli. Rahul will be defeated there as well," he mentioned.

Calling former AICC president Sonia Gandhi as "Maharani" (queen), Yediyurappa said Sonia vacated her constituency for her son and became a Rajya Sabha member. "Sonia's dream to ensure Rahul's victory will be shattered this time. The BJP will win from Rae Bareli," he said.

The former CM said the Congress' guarantees will not work in its favour. The people will believe only in 'Modi's Guarantee'. Reacting to the allegations of rape against Hassan NDA candidate Prajwal Revanna, Yediyurappa said it will not have any impact on the BJP-JDS alliance's winning prospects, and that the alliance is intact.

> It (Congress) is only misleading the people over Central grants. We are facing this election based on the 10 years of achievements of PM Narendra Modi
>
> BS Yediyurappa, former chief minister

Yediyurappa alleged that the Congress lacks a bankable leadership and its government has not achieved anything to seek votes based on the same. "It is only misleading the people over Central grants. We are facing this election based on the 10 years of achievements of PM Narendra Modi. But the Congress is facing this election on lies." Yediyurappa also stated that the Congress is indulging in the politics of polarisation. "The law and order situation in the state is unstable," he added.

CM to extend fin aid to assault victims: Surjewala

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Belagavi

AICC General Secretary, Karnataka in-charge, Randeep Singh Surjewala said here on Sunday that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will extend financial support to all the victims in the alleged Prajwal Revanna sex scandal. He said such a heinous incident has occurred for the first time in the country and thousands of women have suffered the worst abuse.

He said, "(Congress senior leader) Rahul Gandhi has written to Siddaramaiah stating that the individual (Prawal) who committed heinous crimes has allegedly raped an elderly woman aged 68 and also recorded videos of raping thousands of women of different ages. A woman has also been allegedly kidnapped by the family of the accused. Rahul has demanded a thorough investigation into the case."

He alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and JDS leaders are protecting a mass rapist.

"On December 22, 2023, a BJP leader had furnished all evidence to Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah about Prajwal Revanna's sex scandal. Even after that, why did the two top BJP leaders opted for an alliance with JDS for the Lok Sabha elections? Modi was well aware of the charges faced by Prajwal and the crimes he committed," he charged.

'Duty of Centre'

Despite knowing Prajwal's involvement in the case, BJP-JDS leaders decided to field him as their Lok Sabha candidate, he alleged.

"Why did Prime Minister Narendra Modi go to Hassan for the election campaign, and raise the hand of Prajwal in the rally saying, 'Prajwal Revanna ki jeeth se Modi ko takath milegi'," he asked. Were Modi and Shah not aware of Prajwal fleeing the country? It is the duty of the Centre to bring back an individual who committed a heinous crime and ran away from the country," Surjewala said.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, flanked by Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and AICC general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala, addresses a press conference in Belagavi on Sunday | EXPRESS

Modi will never become PM again: CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Davanagere

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday said Narendra Modi will never become Prime Minister again and there is a strong anti-Modi wave across the country. "Even BJP people know this. BJP's defeat in these elections is imminent," he said with conviction.

Campaigning for Congress candidate Dr Prabha Mallikarjun as part of 'Prajadhwani-2' at Harihar and Honnali Assembly segments of Davanagere parliamentary constituency, he said the 25 BJP MPs who got elected from the state in 2019 never questioned in Parliament injustice meted out to Karnataka, nor raised their voice for Karnataka issues. Realising that there could be a backlash from voters, BJP changed many MPs this time. But the new set too will not win, he added.

He said the Congress government walks the talk and it is evident from the fulfilment of five guarantees within eight months of coming to power. "During my earlier tenure, I gave Anna Bhagya, Ksheera Bhagya, farmers' loan waiver, Indira Canteen for the poor, Shoe Bhagya and Shaadi Bhagya, all of which were for the welfare of the poor," he added.

He said that after the Lok Sabha elections, the government will implement the lift irrigation project that will supply water to 5,000 hectares in Harihar.

> Till date, I have never seen a Prime Minister who tells so many lies. He (Narendra Modi) is trying to create a divide between Muslims and Dalits, Backward Classes and Dalits
>
> Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

He said BJP is indulging in divisive politics, forgetting the welfare of the common man. Modi says Congress has snatched the reservation of Dalits and Backward Classes and given it to Muslims, which is a big lie. "Till date, I have never seen a Prime Minister who tells so many lies. He is trying to create a divide between Muslims and Dalits, Backward Classes and Dalits," he alleged.

He said the Prime Minister gave 10 per cent reservation to economically backward classes, which is unconstitutional. The reservation can be given only to educationally and socially backward. "I don't know whether Modi knows the Constitution completely or not. If we come to power at the Centre, we are sure that the reservation percentage will be increased," he added.

DKS slaps local Cong leader for trying to put hand on him

ENS @ Haveri

DCM DK Shivakumar allegedly slapped a local Congress leader during campaigning at Savanur on Saturday night.

When he arrived to campaign for party Haveri candidate Vinod Asuti, many party workers rushed towards him, raised slogans and started dancing. Savanur Town Municipal member Allauddin Maniyar tried to put his hands on Shivakumar, when the DCM glared at him before slapping the local representative.

A video of the incident went viral on social media sites. Some Congress leaders said Maniyar was only trying to protect Shivakumar from the surging crowd of supporters and was not putting his hands across the top leader. Shivakumar misunderstood his intention and slapped him, they added. The police too arrived at the spot, hit the local leader and pushed him aside.

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi posted on X, "Our PM Narendra Modi called India as one parivar and Karnataka DCM slapped town municipal members and pushed him away. Gandhiji said that if any slaps show another side of the face but DK Shivakumar did not give him this opportunity. This is Congress culture."

TN govt clarified that there is no restriction on the general public visiting Ooty and Kodaikanal. It announced that there are no restrictions on tourists and visitors travelling for commercial purposes to these hill stations

OFF KERALA COAST

Coast Guard detains Iranian boat with 6 Indians on board

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

IN a swift sea-air coordinated operation Indian Coast Guard (ICG) on Sunday intercepted and detained a foreign fishing vessel of Iranian nationality off Beypore while the boat was heading towards Kerala coast.

The initial investigations revealed that the boat is owned by an Iranian sponsor, who had contracted six Indian fishermen from Kanyakumari by issuing them Iranian visas for fishing off Iran Coast in his boat since March 26 last year.

The crew stated that the sponsor had been ill treating them since the day they were hired and has not provided them with basic living conditions. Further they had also alleged the sponsor named Syed Saud Ansari for having confiscated their passports. The crew subsequently decided to escape from Iran to India using the same boat, where they were working as fishermen, according to officials.

Indian Coast Guard ship Abhinav C-404 and Indian Coast Guard Advanced Light Helicopter were used in the operation.

"The apprehended boat is being brought to Kochi, Kerala for further investigations and legal proceedings. The apprehension of a foreign fishing boat by the ICG, with Indian crew onboard once again highlights the complexities of maritime security and the challenges being faced by any maritime law enforcement agency in preventing illegal activities at sea," said an official.

This incident underscores the ICG's ongoing efforts to safeguard India's maritime borders and maintain law and order in maritime zones of India. The boat was thoroughly checked by the ICG team to check for the boat's involvement in any anti- national activity.

SC/ST, OBC quotas secure under BJP: Shah

Slams Cong for lies that PM will abolish reservation if BJP secures majority, says SCs\ STs, OBCs quotas will be increased

NAVYA PARVATHY @Hyderabad

REAFFIRMING the BJP's stance on quotas, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said that reservations for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) would not end as long as there was at least one saffron party MP in Parliament.

Addressing an election rally in Kagaznagar (Adilabad Lok Sabha constituency), he reiterated that while religious reservations will be scrapped, the quotas for SCs, STs and OBCs will be increased. He also alleged that TPCC president and Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy shared a doctored video of him speaking on reservations.

Referring to the case filed against him over engaging children in election campaigning, Shah said, "I will not cry like Revanth Reddy. I will approach the high court."

The senior BJP leader exuded confidence that the saffron party will emerge victorious in 10 out of the 17 Lok Sabha seats in Telangana.

Alleging that the vote bank of the Congress and the AIMIM

are the same, Shah claimed that former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge and Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi did not attend the Ram Temple consecration despite being invited due to fear of this vote bank.

Slamming the Opposition for their "lies" that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will abolish reservations if the BJP secures a majority in the Lok Sabha elections, the union home minister pointed out that Modi has had the majority for 10 years. "During this time, he abrogated Article 370, outlawed triple talaq and built the Ram temple," he added.

Addressing a public meeting in Nizamabad, Shah alleged that while GST is collected elsewhere in the country, the RR ('Rahul-Revanth') tax was being collected in the state. "This tax is being sent to Delhi's durbar", he added.

Terming them "ABC", the union home minister accused AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, the BRS and the Congress of engaging in appeasement of the Muslim community. As a part of this, they placed a ban on the Ram Shobha yatra in Hyderabad, he alleged.

Taking a jibe at Kharge's remarks over his remarks on the abrogation of Article 370 at his public meeting in Secunderabad, Shah said that the Congress chief was ignorant of the views of Telangana people, who are ready and willing to lay down their lives for Kashmir.

Stating that while four generations of the Congress chanted 'Garibi Hatao' slogans but did nothing, the union home minister asserted Modi gave houses, gas, toilets, free electricity, rations, medicines and water to 80 crore poor people. He asked voters, "Tell me, what is your choice?"

Rahul dares Modi to remove 50% ceiling

MANDA RAVINDER REDDY @ Hyderabad

CONTINUING the attack on the BJP over its stance on affirmative action policies, former AICC president Rahul Gandhi challenged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to remove the 50% ceiling on reservations.

While the Congress is trying to protect the Constitution of India, the BJP and RSS are trying to destroy it, he opined.

Addressing public meetings in Nirmal (Adilabad Lok Sabha constituency) and Alampur (Nagarkurnool Lok Sabha constituency), the Wayanad MP said Modi wanted to snatch reservations from marginalised people. "The BJP does not wish to see people from Backward Classes (BCs), Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) moving forward in life," he added.

Claiming that the saffron party was destroying the values enshrined in the Constitution, Rahul said, "Whatever the poor in the country have today is because of the Constitution. However, BJP leaders say they will change it if they win again. If the Constitution is changed, reservations for marginalised communities will end."

He said while the PM has not spoken about removing the 50% ceiling on reservations, the Congress, in its manifesto, has promised to do so and increase the quotas for deprived groups. Rahul criticised Modi saying that the latter had privatised the public sector and was implementing a contract system for jobs, which is akin to removing reservations. If the Congress comes to power, it will scrap such a system, he added.

Rain fury wipes out crops worth Rs 25cr

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Mysuru

OVER 900 farmers have suffered losses to the tune of ₹25 crore after their banana plantation in around 1,250 acres was destroyed in rains and wild winds in Chamarajanagar district on Friday.

Hoping for better prices, the farmers had decided to harvest the crop in the next week. Now they are a worried lot as the plantations are completely damaged. Even papaya growers too have suffered losses in the rain fury.

Gundlupet taluk was worst hit as crops in over 700 acres were damaged followed by Chamarajanagar, Kollegal, Yalandur and Hanur taluks in the district.

The horticulture department has gathered primary data of crop loss and will come up with a detailed report in a week as they are still gathering reports through field assistants and village accountants.

Officials are also directed to coordinate with framers who are pressing for early collection of data and want the government to pay compensation at the earliest. They said farmers have lost at least ₹2 lakh per acre.

Despite poor power supply to irrigation pump sets, the farmers had managed to raise a bumper crop which is now damaged in the rain.

Deputy Commissioner Shilpa Nag has assured compensation as per the State Disaster Mitigation Fund guidelines once the crop loss reports are ready, which are expected in a couple of days. Meanwhile, framers are demanding the actual cost as compensation and not a token amount as it will only push them into debt.

Farmers in Kattur and other places in Mysuru taluk have also lost banana plantations in the rains. There are reports that watermelon crop is also damaged.

Jumbo menace: Farmers stay alert

Amid rain fury, farmers are trying to protect sugarcane fields from elephants in groups beating drums, bursting crackers and chasing them by burning torch. Sugarcane growers are spending sleepless nights in border areas and those falling close to the forest fringe fearing that jumbos may raid their crop anytime and destroy it.

A banana farm destroyed by heavy rain and strong winds in Dodda Katuru of Mysuru taluk | EXPRESS

Spike in temperature to hit coffee, areca and pepper yield

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chikkamagaluru

Affected coffee leaves and drooping immature coffee beans in a coffee estate in Kalasa taluk of Chikkamagaluru

It is better to postpone tree pruning in the coffee plantations as the sun's rays fall on the exposed plants, thereby damaging them

Bhoje Gowda, Coffee grower

Plantation workers are fatigued while working in estates and are falling prey to illnesses. The only remedy is good showers

Plantation workers

INTENSE temperature coupled with heatwave has impacted coffee and areca crops in the plains of the Malnad region. With mercury level shooting up to 36 degrees Celsius, commercial crops like coffee, areca and pepper have been severely affected. With the adverse heat continuing to hit the region, unripe arecanuts that had just started to sprout, started dropping because of lack of moisture. Though the region witnessed pre-monsoon once or twice in Kalasa and Mudigere taluks, the heatwave that followed, nullified moisture, thus affecting the crops.

It was not just the arecanuts, the scorching sun and the burning heat have adversely affected sprouted coffee beans as well. Unripe beans blackened and died, thus cutting a major dip in the yield. Normally, planters prune the trees in the estate in January and February, soon after picking the coffee in November and December. Hence, coffee plants are exposed to heat and hot temperature and beans start to shrink and droop. Former Karnataka Growers' Federation president B S Jayaram said, "There will be a drastic drop in the yield of coffee crops. If this weather continues, we cannot expect good prices next year too."

"Price of the Robusta coffee has slightly spiked but it is grown in smaller amounts, when compared to Arabica coffee which is grown in large numbers, which is why the price of Arabica is not stable," said coffee grower Beranagodu Mahesh. Another coffee planter Bhoje Gowda said, "It is better to postpone tree pruning in the coffee plantations as the sun's rays fall on the exposed plants, thereby damaging them." He further added that deficit rain, and the sun's heat have curtailed the growth of pepper vines, and its leaves have begun to fade. Growers are anxious about the health of vines, and a probable drop in the prices in the coming year, he added. "Plantation workers are fatigued while working in the estates and are falling prey to illnesses. The only remedy is good showers," many planters opined.

'108' ambulance staff to start strike from today, demand regular salary

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

DISAPPOINTED over not being paid their regular salaries by GVK EMRI for the past five months, '108' ambulances in Karnataka may cease operations from today (May 6). Around 715 ambulances and approximately 3,500 employees across Karnataka are associated with the 108 ambulance associations' service. The association employees claimed they had only received the equivalent of two months' salary over the past five months. The association operates approximately 90 ambulances in Bengaluru, with over 400 workers.

Paramashiva, vice president of Suvarna Karnataka Sangha, informed TNIE that the association will halt its services from 8 pm on Monday until they receive their regular salary, which ranges from Rs 29,000 to Rs 31,000 per month.

"We are receiving just over Rs 10,000 monthly. With each employee working a 12-hour shift, it is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain our livelihoods. Despite providing essential services for families, GVK EMRI is not addressing our basic needs," Paramashiva said and claimed that salaries were deducted without any prior notification or information being provided.

Speaking to TNIE, Randeep D, Health Commissioner, said, "We have already issued Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) notice to the 108 Service Provider earlier itself so that 108 emergency ambulance services are not disrupted, at any point of time."

To clarify on salaries, the corrected wages were released recently to 108 employees by the Service Provider upto month of Jan 2024. These corrected wages have been paid by the service provider to ensure that payment is as per applicable minimum wages only. Also this is to ensure that annual payments for 108 ambulance service as a whole, is kept well within the MoU approved amount of Rs 162.40 crore for the financial year, the senior official added. It is clarified that for the FY 23-24, government has fully released the required Rs 162.40 crore to the service provider. The service provider would be releasing the corrected wages for months of February and March 2024 in the next few days and report to government, Randeep added and highlighted that the due wages for April 2024 shall be paid out of the first quarter advance release made by the state for FY 2024-25.

Kerala coast faces intense sea waves

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @T'Puram

THE coastal areas faced intense sea waves, with swell waves revisiting the coast after a gap of one month. In Thiruvananthapuram, the sea attack was experienced at the Poothura- Anchuthengu region. The waves breached the coastal road near Anchakadavu and reached the houses located on the east side of the road. The waves topped over the sea walls and further damaged the houses on the western side of the road. Sea incursions were also reported in Bekal in Kasaragod, Kodungallur in Thrissur, and Thrikunnapuzha in Alappuzha. However early alerts helped fishermen to safeguard boats and nets. Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services warned that the swell wave would continue till Sunday. Meanwhile, IMD has predicted light to moderate rainfall across the state till May 9.

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TENDER NOTICE

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IDBI Bank Ltd. wishes to invite bids from eligible Outsourcing Vendors (OSV) for providing Back Office Support Services for its Offices/Centers/Branches. Interested Vendors may download the RFP document from IDBI Bank's website www.idbibank.in (Notices & Tenders). All bids must be submitted in a sealed envelopes, superscribed "Request for Empanelment as OSV for providing Back Office Support Services", and reach The GM, IDBI Bank Ltd, IDBI Tower, WTC Complex, Cuffe Parade, Mumbai – 400005 by 3.00 PM on May 27, 2024.

Date: 06.05.2024 **SD /-**
Place: Mumbai **Authorised Officer**

'Might have to suspend offers'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

"WITH this trend, we may soon temporarily suspend weekend offers, including buy 2 get 1 on all brand beers," he said.

Prithvi, the operational head of another brewery on Residency Road, said with the current temperatures, they find it challenging to maintain cool fermentation temperatures and adequately cool the wort -- the liquid solution of extracted grains and a sugar source brewers create and ultimately feed to beer yeasts, after the boil. "We haven't encountered such weather consequences, so it is taking time to adapt to new measures that can offer a temporary solution," she added.

BJP PROMISES ₹50K VOUCHER FOR WOMEN IN MANIFESTO

BIJOY PRADHAN @ Bhubaneswar

WITH an eye on women voters who constitute nearly 50 per cent of the state's electorate, the BJP on Saturday promised to launch 'Subhadra Yojana' under which every woman will a get cash voucher of ₹50,000, if it comes to power.

Releasing the 'Sankalp Patra' (election manifesto) with the stamp of Modi's guarantee for Odisha Assembly elections that will be held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha polls commencing May 13, BJP national president JP Nadda said the voucher can be encashed over a period of two years. The scheme is aimed at empowering women through financial assistance but the real motive is to wean women members of self help groups (SHGs) from the grip of BJD. The women SHGs are considered the major vote bank of BJD.

BJP national president J P Nadda releases manifesto for Odisha assembly election in Bhubaneswar on Sunday

The saffron party has also promised to increase the remuneration of anganwadi workers to ₹12,000 and anganwadi heplers to Rs 8,000 per month. Just before announcement of the general elections, the state government had increased the monthly salary of anganwadi workers from Rs 7,500 to Rs 10,000, mini anganwadi workers from Rs 5,378 to Rs 7,250 and anganwadi sahayikas from Rs 3,750 to Rs 5,000. Nadda said the NDA government has empowered one crore rural women to become 'Lakhpati Didis'. The party now aims to create 25 lakh 'Lakhpati Didis' in Odisha by 2027. The party further promised it will request the Central government to include ASHA workers in National Health Mission permanently.

EXPRESS READ

SpiceJet directed to pay ₹1L for delay in service

Madurai: The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission in Madurai directed SpiceJet to pay a compensation of Rs 1 lakh for failing to ensure prompt delivery of passengers' luggage. Acting on a complaint lodged by two passengers, the commission, directed the manager and corporate head of the airlines to pay an additional amount of Rs 10,000 for litigation expenses.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

THE ALL-NEW APP

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> This time, 35 days were available for campaign. The voters are matured and know the importance of the ongoing election. They have decided to hand over the nation to those leaders who are capable of administering it ably
>
> Basavaraj Bommai, Gadag-Haveri BJP candidate

2.59 CR VOTERS WILL DECIDE FATE OF 227 NETAS TOMORROW

Heatwave biggest challenge for voters, poll officials in Phase-3

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

A TOTAL of 2,59,52,958 voters will on Tuesday decide the fate of 227 candidates in Phase-3 of Lok Sabha elections in 14 parliamentary constituencies of Kitur and Kalyana-Karnataka and Malnad regions of the state.

Elections for the Shorapur Assembly constituency too will be held on May 7. Of the six candidates contesting, one each is from BJP and Congress, while four are independents.

Polling will be from 7 am till 6 pm. The biggest challenge for Election Commission officials and voters is combating the heatwave. While some political representatives have requested the Election Commission to extend voting beyond 6 pm, officials said no decision has been taken yet.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a severe heatwave alert for North Karnataka regions where the temperatures could go up to 45-46 degrees Celsius on the day of the polls. Officials in the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Karnataka, said regular bulletins from IMD are being obtained and accordingly, all precautionary measures have been taken. Arrangements for sufficient water, fans and shade have been made. Additional CEO Venkatesh Kumar R told The New Indian Express that each polling booth has been mapped to primary health centres, referral hospitals and district hospitals. The district administration has ensured all health centres have sufficient ambulances and medical staff on standby. Also, each polling booth will have an ASHA worker or Auxiliary Nurse Midwife worker, a medical kit with ORS and other supplies.

Election officials have also allowed parties to keep ORS and other medical facilities at their counters. But they have been directed not to influence or bribe voters with it.

To ensure fair elections and secrecy while voting, the CEO's office has directed that no mobile phones will be allowed while casting votes. Returning officers have ensured that a separate tray or counter will be available for voters to keep their phones before voting. No smart watches are also allowed inside the voting area.

Of the 14 constituencies, Bijapur and Gulbarga are Schedule Caste reserved, Raichur and Bellary are Schedule Tribe reserved and the remaining -- Chikkodi, Belgaum, Bagalkot, Bidar, Koppal, Haveri, Dharwad, Uttara Kannada, Davanagere and Shimoga -- are general category.

The largest number of voters in this phase is in Gulbarga constituency at 20,98,202 and the lowest is in Uttara Kannada at 16,41,156. There are 6,90,929 young voters, 2,29,263 are aged above 85 and 3,43,966 are listed as People with Disabilities.

Of the 227 candidates, 206 are men and 21 women. BJP and Congress have 14 candidates each, Bahujan Samaj Party nine and 117 are independents. The highest number of candidates (30) is from Davangere, followed by Shimoga (23) and Bagalkot (22). Eight candidates each are contesting from Bijapur and Raichur.

To increase the voter turnout and help people find their booth, election officials have printed a QR code behind each voting slip, which when scanned will direct the voter to her/his booth using GPS technology. The CEO's office has also launched the Chunavane app, which can be downloaded from Playstore. It gives the live status of the polling booth -- number of people in queue, parking facility and other details. Special theme-based booths - like Sakhi, youth and PwD -- have been set up. Signages have been put in all booths for voters to easily identify their voting rooms.

In Phase-2, two parliamentary constituencies of Bangalore Rural and Mysore-Kodagu had 100 per cent webcasting. But in Phase-3, no such special arrangement has been made. Webcasting, however, is being done in 60% of the booths. Over 1.90 lakh polling officials will be deployed on election duty at 28,269 polling booths. Also 65 companies and 50,000 police personnel have been deployed.

Election officials have also asked voters to use the Saksham app, in case voters need special facilities like wheelchairs, assistance and others. Senior citizens or specially abled too can opt for pick up and drop facility. Officials said ramps, wheelchairs, Braille, assistance for hearing impaired, sufficient lighting, sign language experts, assistants for specially abled, washrooms, water facility, seating arrangement and other essentials have been arranged at each booth.

Unlike in Phase-2, the fight between the two major parties -- BJP and Congress -- will be close and tough in this phase.

NO EPIC? TAKE THESE DOCUS

VOTERS WHO DON'T HAVE THEIR EPIC (ELECTION PHOTO ID CARD) CAN TAKE THESE CARDS/ DOCUMENTS WITH THEM:

● Aadhaar card ● MGNREGA Job Card ● Bank/ Post Office passbook with photograph ● Health insurance smart card issued under by Labour ministry ● Driving licence ● PAN card ● Smart card issued by registrar for National Population Register ● Indian Passport ● Pension document with photograph ● Service identity card with photograph issued to employees by Central/State govt/ PSUs/ public limited companies ● Official identity cards issued to MPs/MLAs/MLCs ● Unique Disability ID card

FIND YOUR BOOTH

Scan QR code behind voter's slip to navigate to nearest polling booth. Voters can check their polling station details and poll date through this link https://electoralsearch.eci.gov.in/

MORE INFO

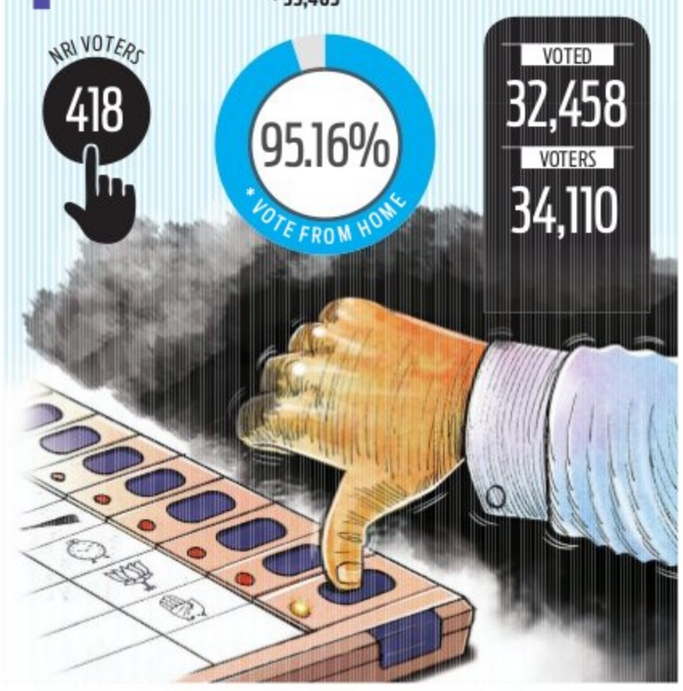
Details of Returning Officers can be found at https://ceo.karnataka.gov.in/uploads/media_to_upload1711540406.pdf

For details of polling booths and live status, download Chunavane app

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ksrsac.pollingstation

To know all about voting details, candidates, constituencies, trends and maps https://kgis.ksrsac.in/election/

Voter helpline number -- 1650 X- Chat -- @ECISVEEP / @ceo_karnataka



READY FOR THE RUMBLE

The stage is set for the third phase of Lok Sabha elections in the country and the second and final phase in Karnataka. A total of 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state are going for elections on May 7. Here's a look:

SHIVAMOGGA

Cong: Geetha Shivarajkumar
BJP: B Y Raghavendra
Last winner: B Y Raghavendra (BJP)
Total voters: 17,52,885

DAVANAGERE

Cong: Dr Prabha Mallikarjun
BJP: Gayathri Siddeshwara
Last winner: G M Siddeshwara (BJP)
Total voters: 17,09,244

DHARWAD

Cong: Vinod Asuti
BJP: Pralhad Joshi
Last winner: Pralhad Joshi (BJP)
Total voters: 18,31,975

VIJAYAPURA

Cong: Raju Algur
BJP: Ramesh Jigajinagi
Last winner: Ramesh Jigajinagi (BJP)
Total Voters: 19, 19, 048

BAGALKOT

Cong: Samyukta Patil
BJP: P C Gaddigoudar
Last winner: P C Gaddigoudar (BJP)
Total Voters: 17,81,395

HAVERI

Cong: Anandswamy Gaddadevaramath
BJP: Basavaraj Bommai
Last winner: Shivakumar Udasi (BJP)
Total voters: 17,77,877

KOPPAL

Cong: K Rajshekhar Basavaraj Hitnal
BJP: Dr Basavaraj Kyavatur
Last winner: Karadi Sanganna (BJP)
Total voters: 18,66,397

BELAGAVI

Cong: Mrinal Ravindra Hebbalkar
BJP: Jagadish Shettar
Last winner: Mangala Suresh Angadi (BJP)
Total voters: 19,04,099

CHIKKODI

Cong: Priyanka Satish Jarkiholi
BJP: Annasaheb Shankar Jolle
Last winner: Annasaheb Shankar Jolle (BJP)
Total voters: 17,41,758

GULBARGA

Cong: Radhakrishna Doddamani
BJP: Dr Umesh Jadhav
Last winner: Dr Umesh Jadhav (BJP)
Total Voters: 20,35,806

BIDAR

Cong: Sagar Khandre
BJP: Bhagavant Khuba
Last winner: Bhagavant Khuba (BJP)
Total Voters: 18,45,429

RAICHUR

Cong: Kumar Nayak
BJP: Raja Amareshwar Nayak
Last winner: Raja Amareshwar Nayak (BJP)
Total Voters: 20,10,103

BALLARI

Cong: E Tukaram
BJP: B Sriramulu
Last winner: Y Devendrappa (BJP)
Total voters: 18, 65, 341

UTTARA KANNADA

Cong: Dr Anjali Nimbalkar
BJP: Vishveshwar Hegde Kageri
Last winner: Ananth Kumar Hegde (BJP)
Total voters: 15,52,483

NUMBERS GAME

Lingayats may not vote en bloc, but likely to prefer sub-castes

BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

AHEAD of the Phase-3 of Lok Sabha elections on Tuesday, BJP may have realised that the lion's share of Lingayat support it enjoyed in many elections over the last few decades could be turning into a mirage.

Though BJP senior leader BS Yediyurappa, considered a Lingayat strongman, has been campaigning in all the 14 constituencies, the party has realised that it will be difficult to repeat the results of the last Lok Sabha elections when it won all the 14 seats in the region aided by Lingayats, who are the deciding factor in majority of seats.

Veerashaiva Mahasabha secretary Renuka Prasanna said, "Basava Nadu used to vote only for BJP, but the Lingayat community will not remain a homogenous vote bank for BJP forever. The previous election demonstrated that and this election too, it will be on show."

For starters, infighting in the party that is known for its discipline has been its biggest challenge. The party has struggled with the standoff between Lingayat leaders Madhuswamy and V Somanna, between Holalkere Chandrappa and Govinda Karjol in Chitradurga, Ananth Kumar Hegde and Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri in Uttara Kannada and Bhagwant Khuba and Prabhu Chavan in Bidar.

Adding to party's troubles, Lingayat seer Dingaleshwara Swamiji too joined the fray initially, but later withdrew. But now, he has resumed addressing public meetings aimed solely at defeating Union minister Pralhad Joshi in the Dharwad constituency.

Also, Lingayats are not voting en bloc and are talking of casting their franchise based on sub-castes like Lingayat Panchamsali, Lingayat Banajiga and Lingayat Ganiga. Also, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's announcement of starting a university to study the Vachana literature and naming social reformer Basavanna as the cultural icon of Karnataka have softened the Lingayat stand towards Congress.

Experts point out that BJP ignored social engineering while selecting candidates for the crucial polls. It gave seats only to Lingayat, Brahmin and SC/STs, while completely ignoring representatives from other castes, who have a substantial vote share in the region. In all the 14 constituencies, their candidates are either Lingayat or Brahmin. Wherever there is a reserved constituency, the ticket has been given to a representative from that community. BJP will also find it difficult to get votes of minorities, who constitute 12-20 per cent of the electorate in these constituencies. Added to this is the sizeable OBC presence and BJP has always found it difficult to break into the Dalit vote base because of Mallikarjun Kharge, a Dalit from Kalaburagi, who is AICC president. This time, there could be the strongest consolidation ever of Dalit votes in favour of Congress, which BJP is realising in many constituencies. Political analyst BS Murthy said, "BJP did not pay sufficient attention to its social engineering and that may not help the party because all candidates here are either Lingayat or Brahmin. There is no palpable wave in favour of BJP so far. Infighting and rebellion may cost the party dear. BJP has never looked this vulnerable in the last three polls."

A BJP functionary, requesting anonymity, said, "The party has always enjoyed the blessings of the Lingayat community. I agree that we may not sweep all 14 seats, but we still enjoy a solid advantage and support in North Karnataka. Also, don't discount the Modi factor. I believe barring 3-4 seats, BJP will do well here. I believe Lingayats still prefer BJP."

> **The Lingayat community will not remain a homogenous vote bank for BJP forever. The previous election demonstrated that and this election too, it will be on show**
>
> — Renuka Prasanna, secretary, Veerashaiva Mahasabha

After EBs, questions raised over PM Cares Fund

BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

WITH the Electoral Bonds now declared unconstitutional, a few individuals are of the opinion that PM Cares Fund needs to be probed, and there should be transparency in the flow of money, and what the fund has been used for.

"PM Narendra Modi claims he brought in transparency through Electoral Bonds, but was exposed. The public has a right to know what the PM Cares Fund is being used for, and how much was spent for what purpose," said AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge.

"Welfare funds have gone to this fund and to the RSS. Today, RSS has taken direct or indirect control of Sainik Schools and Kendriya Vidyalayas. The government has handed over several schools to them. Whose property is it? If private organizations are given control of schools, what happens to reservation? Will the poor be given seats in such schools? Modi is destroying poor people's hopes and handing over this country to rich people. So far, he has shown no account of how much has been spent, no one knows who has contributed and how much, and like Electoral Bonds, there is no accountability," he said.

Former Supreme Court judge Justice Madan Lokur told TNIE, "There should be transparency and the competent authority dealing with private trusts should look into this."

Rajya Sabha MP and former Union minister Kapil Sibal too was highly critical of the secrecy surrounding the fund. "The PM doesn't care to tell anybody who the donors are. It is public money, for public expenditure, and should be subject to public scrutiny. But like Electoral Bonds, it has been kept under wraps. Wonder what will be revealed if the names of donors are made public," he said.

"It is the most corrupt activity of this Prime Minister. The way the account is created and managed shows it is corrupt," said former senior IAS officer MG Devasahayam, who is part of the Constitution Conduct Group, a set of retired senior bureaucrats who believe in speaking truth to power, and not affiliated to any political party. "Any fund collection has to be transparent, and this opacity shows an institutional collapse. Why this secrecy from government auditing and RTI? Have the funds been used to develop the personality of the Prime Minister, who appears to be bigger than the party?"

Political economist Parkala Prabhakar said the PM Cares Fund is housed in the Prime Minister's Office, South Block, New Delhi, it uses the official Indian emblem and its web address ends with gov.in, so how can the government justify that it doesn't come under RTI? "It's a scam waiting to be revealed and could be bigger than Electoral Bonds. Government employees donated a day's salary and CSR funds from PSUs were transferred to it. The government is not telling us where it is getting money from and what it is spending it on," he said.

Responding to Kharge's charges, former BJP media coordinator S Prakash stated, "As Opposition leader in the Rajya Sabha, he is expected to react responsibly. Every year, the PM Cares Fund is audited by independent auditors, and everything is uploaded on the website. He should take time and read it."

In Kharge's turf, Santhosh's prestige at stake

BJP national general secretary B L Santhosh speaks at a booth committee workers' meeting in Kalyana Karnataka

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @Bengaluru

AS the campaign trail falls silent in the 14 Lok Sabha constituencies of North Karnataka that are going to the polls on Tuesday, BJP national general secretary (organisation) B L Santhosh will be keeping his fingers crossed that his efforts does not go in vain as his prestige is at stake. This is especially so in the five LS seats of Kalyan Karnataka, including Kalaburagi, home turf of AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge where he has focussed and campaigned subtly.

According to sources, after receiving a report that certain BJP leaders are providing tacit support to the Congress, Santhosh rushed to the region to keep the party flock together.

Santhosh has held booth committee workers' meetings in Kalaburagi, Bidar and Koppal LS constituencies, where party candidates Dr Umesh Jadhav, Bhagawant Khuba and newbie Basavaraj Kyavatoor are facing a tough fight from Congress candidates Kharge's son-in-law Radhakrishna Doddamani, Sagar Khandre and Rajashekar Hitnal, respectively.

He also held similar meetings in Raichur where BJP's Raja Amareshwar Naik is taking on the former bureaucrat Kumar Naik, a newbie, and in Ballari where former minister B Sriramulu has locked horns with Sanduru Congress MLA E Tukaram.

The BJP went all out by not depending upon former CM B S Yediyurappa and the Modi wave. It made use of Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi leader Mandakrishna Madiga to fetch a section of Madiga (SC left) community votes because Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised him to classify the SC quota during the Telangana assembly polls.

Former minister and Gangavathi MLA Gali Janardhana Reddy and JDS state president H D Kumaraswamy also chipped in.

Interestingly, Yediyurappa did not campaign in the Kalyan Karnataka region, except for attending Modi's rally and a meeting in Raichur, as aggressively as in Old Mysuru and Shimoga LS constituency.

They want to say that we will end reservations. I give you a Modi guarantee today. As long as there is even a single BJP member in the country's parliament, we will not let Dalit, Adivasi, OBC reservations end

Amit Shah, Home Minister

Chhattisgarh: Voting in remaining 7 LS seats will decide whether the ruling BJP continues to have an edge over Congress months after Assembly elections

STAR CAMPAIGNERS THRONG RURAL AREAS

BJP banks on Modi and 4 months of 'good governance', as Congress focuses on swing seats with Nyay card. Chhattisgarhiya swabhiman is part of campaigns on both sides

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

PHASE 3 VOTING

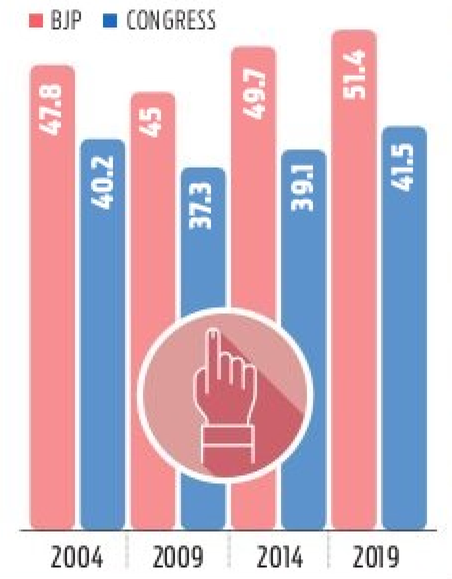
TOTAL LOK SABHA SEATS 07 | TOTAL VOTERS 1,39,00,665 | MALE 69,33,121 | FEMALE 69,67,544 | POLLING CENTRES 15,701 | DISTRICTS COVERED 18

TOTAL CANDIDATES: 168 (INCLUDING 26 WOMEN)

FORCES DEPLOYED: 202 COMPANIES

CANDIDATES IN POLL FRAY

Constituency	BJP	Congress
1. Raipur	Brijmohan Agrawal	Vikash Upadhya
2. Durg	Vijay Baghel	Rajendra Sahu
3. Bilaspur	Tokhanram Sahu	Devendra Yadav
4. Sarguja	Chintamani Maharaj	Sashi Singh Korram
5. Raigarh	Radheyshyam Rathiya	Menka Devi Singh
6. Janjgir-Champa	Kamlesh Jangde	Shiv Dehariya
7. Korba	Saroj Pandey	Jyotsana Mahant



VOTER TURNOUT (%)

PHASES	INDIA	CHHATTISGARH
First	66.14	68.30
Second	66.71	76.24

VOTING for the remaining seven Lok Sabha seats in Chhattisgarh will be held on May 7. The polling in the state saw a voter turnout of 68.3% in the first phase covering the Bastar seat, and 76.24% in the second phase in 3 constituencies of Rajnandgaon, Kanker, Mahasamund.

Star campaigners of the ruling BJP and Congress have mostly flocked to rural belts to address poll rallies. Around 76% of the state's total population lives in rural areas.

Except Korba, the remaining six seats were won by the BJP in the 2019 elections.

When the BJP on December 10 last year picked Vishnu Deo Sai as Chhattisgarh chief minister, the choice wasn't difficult to guess. His appointment fits into the BJP's countrywide tribal outreach, particularly seen in the second tenure of the Modi government. Tribal communities have conventionally been perceived as a non-BJP bloc, and one favouring the Congress. The RSS has also been consistently looking to build cadre among the communities.

Sangh affiliates, such as the Hindu Jagran Manch are working to try and counter the influence of Maoists and Christian evangelical groups.

Religious conversion has emerged as a significant political issue. The area's socio-cultural landscape is dominated by a tug-of-war between different religious groups. There have been concerted efforts to convert the tribal communities to Christianity. BJP has been particularly vocal against Christian missionaries, and has alleged forceful conversion of impoverished tribals.

Congress, on the other hand, has faced challenges in navigating this sensitive issue. Its messaging has been weak, trying to balance respect for tribal rights and religious freedom. Congress' campaign had focused on development of 'Devgudis' (tribal village temples) and 'Ghotuls' (socio-culture centres of tribals) undertaken by Bhupesh Baghel government in the last five years.

The ruling BJP heavily banking on Modi's magic besides allegations of corruption against Bhupesh Baghel government, harping on a four-month of 'good governance' and AB Vajpayee government's creation of Chhattisgarh state in the year 2000. The Congress, with strong focus on some swing seats hoping to enhance chances for the party, believes its 'Nyay' manifesto will win the hearts of the people.

Out of the seven seats going to polls on Tuesday, two are scheduled tribe (ST) constituencies and one belongs to a Scheduled Caste (SC) category.

During the third phase, there are 168 candidates including 26 women in the poll fray. As many as 37 are crorepatis and criminal cases are registered against 16. Women voters outnumber men. The prominent leaders who are contesting include BJP state cabinet minister Brijmohan Agrawal, sitting BJP MP Vijay Baghel, BJP Rajya Sabha member Saroj Pandey (Korba), Congress MP Jyotsana Mahant (Korba), BJP's Chintamani Maharaj (turncoat in fray from Sarguja seat), Congress former state minister Shiv Dehariya (Janjgir-Champa), Congress MLA Devendra Yadav (Bilaspur).

As turncoats fail to make a cut in C'garh, all eyes on Maharaj

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

PAST election results show that most of the turncoat candidates, despite being popular, could not gain the confidence of the voters in Chhattisgarh and lost the polls.

Among others, Karuna Shukla, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's niece who had left the BJP and joined the Congress, and veteran Congress leader late Vidya Charan Shukla, who had defected to the BJP during the 2004 general elections, could not win elections.

Now all eyes are on BJP candidate **Chintamani Maharaj**, who is counted among the senior politicians in Surguja in north Chhattisgarh. He had left the BJP to join the Congress in 2013 and contested Assembly polls from Samri, and from Balrampur seat in 2018. Chintamani was a Congress MLA twice. After he was denied ticket by the Congress ahead of 2023 Assembly polls, he returned to BJP fold, calling it his "ghar vapsi". It remains to be seen if Maharaj gets a favourable response from Surguja voters on May 7 polling.

In the 2018 assembly polls, Karuna Shukla was tipped as a formidable Congress candidate from Rajnandgaon assembly constituency, considered as the strong turf of BJP ex-chief minister Raman Singh who earlier won elections twice from there.

Even the efforts by the Congress candidate staking claim to the legacy of Vajpayee, who died in August 2018, did not work. She lost the Assembly polls. Later in 2019, BJP candidate face Lakhan Lal Sahu defeated her from Bilaspur Lok Sabha seat by a margin of 17,6436 votes. Karuna Shukla had left the BJP to join the Congress in February 2014.

Similarly, VC Shukla, who switched loyalty to the saffron party ahead of the 2004 general elections lost the Mahasamund Lok Sabha seat, where the party gave him an opportunity to contest. First chief minister of Chhattisgarh Ajit Jogi, who was the Congress candidate, won against Shukla, getting 1.18 lakh more votes.

Shukla, a key contender for the post of chief minister after Chhattisgarh was carved out in November 2000, returned to the Congress later. Shukla died of bullet injuries he sustained during an audacious Maoist ambush in May 2013.

QUOTE CORNER

Why will Rahul become PM of Pakistan! He is India's son, his family has sacrificed all for India

Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress chief

BJP works for the 140 crore people of India. It brings out policies for benefits of all sections

Nayab Singh Saini, Haryana CM

Targeting the minority community will not help the country become a strong nation

Omar Abdullah, JKNC vice-president

BIHAR

Democracy and Constitution under severe strain, says Lalu

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

FILE PHOTO

RJD chief Lalu Prasad on Sunday launched an attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying people are apprehensive that Modi would abolish the Constitution and reservation if he returns to power for the third term after the Lok Sabha polls.

"This election is not about dying but about fighting for survival," Lalu said. The RJD chief claimed that 140 crore people of the country are also uncertain whether democracy would survive if Modi was voted back to power.

He said youths are uncertain about their job prospects if Modi becomes PM again. "(Youths are uncertain on) whether Agniveer scheme will be implemented in the police and central paramilitary forces and whether due demands of farmers will ever be met. Whether hatred and divisions in the society will increase and whether the autonomy of constitutional institutions be encroached upon in the third term of Modi." he said.

Modi in his election rally in Darbhanga reminded people of Godhra training burning incident in which over 60 people were killed in 2002 and alleged that Lalu had tried to save those responsible for the killing of 'Kar Sevaks'.

Responding to Lalu's remarks, LJP (Ram Vilas) chief and Jamui MP Chirag Paswan said the opposition with an intention to intimidate people was trying to create an impression that reservation and democracy would cease to exist and Constitution would be changed if NDA returns to power. "Whether there was any danger to democracy, Constitution and reservation during the last 10 years?" he asked.

Tejashwi invokes Vajpayee remark on 'Raj Dharma'

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi charged Lalu Prasad with having tried to shield the culprits in the Godhra train burning case, the RJD president's son Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday recounted the famous "Raj dharma" remark of Atal Bihari Vajpayee made in the backdrop of communal violence in Gujarat. "He (PM) can say whatever he wants. But I remember what Atalji had said at that point of time. Modiji was seated beside Atalji, who advised him to follow 'Raj dharma'," Tejashwi said.

MAHARASHTRA

Even if BJP opens door, will never go back, says Uddhav

ENS & AGENCIES @ Mumbai/Alibaug

SHIV Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said even if the BJP opens the door for him, he will not go back to his former ally, accusing the saffron party of sinking his government in 2022 through 'treachery'.

Addressing a rally at Alibaug in Maharashtra's Raigad district, Thackeray claimed if the BJP wins the Lok Sabha polls, crackers will be burst in India as well as in China as there will be a 'timid' government in New Delhi.

He slammed the BJP over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks that Pakistan was eager to make Congress MP Rahul Gandhi India's next PM. Thackeray said the former ally resorts to fear-mongering using Pakistan's name during polls.

Referring to the Poonch terror attack, Thackeray said the PM and Home Minister Amit Shah won't go there but visit Maharashtra to destroy him.

Meanwhile, campaigning for BJP candidates in Satara, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis termed Narendra Modi a "world leader" and sought people's support to strengthen him further.

"Only Modi has the power to take the entire society forward," Fadnavis said, urging people to vote for Udayanraje Bhosale and help him win with a large margin.

Terming NCP (SP) candidate Shashikant Shinde a "corrupt" man, the DCM said he had been nominated for Satara Lok Sabha against BJP's Udayan Raje.

He also tore into Sharad Pawar, calling him "dishonest". "When Pawar was in power, he ignored people, and now, he is deriding Modi, saying he does not know what sugar cane is. It is the same Modi who freed farmers by revoking the income tax on sugar factories."

He said Modi understands the people's problems. "In the last ten years, laws have changed for farmers, and sugar mills have given power to factories. He has been working to make India modern. No parallels can be drawn between Modi and Rahul Gandhi and Sharad Pawar. These two can never be a match to Modi.

Modi changed laws to benefit farmers: Fadnavis

Fadnavis also tore into Sharad Pawar, calling him "dishonest". "When Pawar was in power, he ignored people, and now, he is deriding Modi, saying he does not know what sugar cane is. It is the same Modi who freed farmers by revoking the income tax on sugar factories." He said Modi understands the people's problems. "In the last ten years, laws have changed for farmers, and sugar mills have given power to factories. He has been working to make India modern. No parallels can be drawn between Modi and Rahul Gandhi and Sharad Pawar. These two can never be a match to Modi.

JHARKHAND

Bike riders to connect 366 booths in shadow areas with no mobile network

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

DISTRICT-WISE NO OF BOOTHS IN SHADOW AREAS

District	Booths	District	Booths	District	Booths
Sahibganj	7	Bokaro	14	Simdega	65
Pakur	3	East Singhbhum	20	Lohardaga	17
Dumka	4	Seraikela-Kharsawan	9	Latehar	14
Koderma	6	West Singhbhum	87	Palamu	7
Hazaribagh	7	Ranchi	13	Garhwa	15
Chatra	1	Gumla	47		

THE Election Commission has decided to deploy bike riders to connect with the polling booths falling in shadow areas of Jharkhand, with no mobile of internet network. These bike riders will pass on messages from the booths to the control room by getting into areas with strong phone signals.

According to Chief Electoral Officer K Ravi Kumar, as many as 366 such polling booths have been identified all over Jharkhand, with a maximum of 87 in Maoist stronghold West Singbhum district.

Out of the 24 districts of the state, shadow areas are spread in as many as 18.

Kumar informed that proper communication arrangements have been made in the shadow areas by installing mobile boosters and proper arrangements for wireless sets have been made. In addition to this, police wireless system will also be installed in each of those 366 polling booths to ensure uninterrupted communication between the officials deployed at polling booths and the control room, he added.

ASSAM

Himanta hones campaign style with music, dance

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

ASSAM Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma is not just an orator but can dance his way into people's hearts as well. He hummed and shook a leg every time 'Akou Abar Modi Sarkar' (Modi government again), the BJP's popular poll song, was played out at his rallies.

The last four of Assam's 14 parliamentary seats will go to polls in the third phase on May 7. After campaigning came to a close on Sunday, the BJP shared the details of Sarma's campaign-related engagements since the time the notification for the elections was issued.

"The CM addressed 100 election meetings, took part in eight roadshows and attended 11 party meetings outside Guwahati. He covered 104 constituencies (Assam has 126 Assembly segments)," BJP's Rajya Sabha member Pabitra Margherita told media on Sunday.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma dances to BJP's poll song during multiple campaigns | X

About 20,000 to one lakh people had attended each of the events, he said.

Pallab Lochan Das, a Lok Sabha member of the party, described Sarma a person full of energy who loves to connect with people. "He is an inspiration for the youth and all political workers. We observed that the level of his energy in his first and last rallies was the same," Das, who was denied a ticket this election, said.

"He makes the atmosphere at his rallies vibrant by dancing. You will not find even a hint of fatigue on his face. He himself said he gets this energy from people's love for him," Das said, adding, "He is the biggest celebrity".

In most of his rallies, Sarma interacted with people and took selfies with them. "Over the past 40-45 days, I danced with around 20 lakh people. I liked the song when I first listened to it in 2019," Sarma said.

EDITORIAL

"People are trapped in history, and history is trapped in them" — James Baldwin

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.
— Ramnath Goenka

NIJJAR CASE ARRESTS AND NEED FOR UNIVERSAL DEFINITION OF TERROR

THE recent arrest of three members of a hit squad in Canada trended because they were charged with the murder of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar outside a gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia, on June 18, 2023. Nijjar had a Canadian passport. The global interest was on whether the trio was tied to the Indian security establishment. The news break came days after the *Washington Post* claimed to have outed an R&AW operative as the handler of a botched attempt to bump off another Khalistani radical in the US, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun. However, the Canadian police gave little away, merely claiming a larger ring was under the scanner and they were looking into their Indian establishment linkage. They refused to share the nature of the evidence and motive. What's known at present is the three people under arrest are Indian nationals who lived in Edmonton for three to five years. They are speculated to have entered Canada on student visas. The trio played different roles as shooters, drivers and spotters on the day Nijjar was killed. Canada is yet to share any information with India, foreign minister S Jaishankar said.

Bilateral relations hit an all-time low after Canadian PM Justin Trudeau flagged the Nijjar case in his talks with PM Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G20 summit in New Delhi without sharing an iota of evidence. Jaishankar accused Trudeau of doing vote bank politics by giving political legitimacy to Khalistani elements because his party is in a minority. He went on to rub it in, adding Canada deserved a strong leader like Modi.

An interim report of an independent investigation released in Canada accused India of 'not differentiating between lawful pro-Khalistani political advocacy and the relatively small Canada-based Khalistani violent extremism'. "It views anyone aligned with Khalistani separatism as a seditious threat," the report said. Apparently, the 1985 bombing of an Air India flight with 329 passengers, mostly Canadian Sikhs, by Khalistani radicals is not even a blip in its national memory. Had Canada acted upon the violent elements, like the Nijjars, chances are the mid-air terror attack could have been avoided. Besides, as many as 25 Indian requests for extradition of Khalistanis are yet to be acted upon. Canada's intransigence re-emphasises the need for a universal definition on terror that is binding on all nations.

UGC BID TO GIVE TEETH TO ANTI-RAGGING MEASURES

WHAT happened with Aman Kachroo in 2009 in a medical college in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra was repeated with J S Siddarthan in a veterinary college in Wayanad in 2023. While Kachroo was beaten to death, Siddarthan was bullied, assaulted and driven to suicide. Many more students have endured ragging, which continues to cast its shadow on campuses. In this scenario, it is hoped the University Grants Commission (UGC)'s latest guidelines for higher education institutions will curb such delinquent behaviour. The UGC has already up drawn up a number of commendable initiatives, including a round-the-clock toll-free helpline and dedicated email ID for students to complain. It has now asked states to set up district-level committees to monitor institutions; the committees will include the district magistrate, additional district magistrate, university head, superintendent of police, local media and student organisations—a robust setup that brings together a number of public stakeholders which will, hopefully, prevent and even eliminate this evil. The UGC also suggests regular counselling, identification of troublemakers, surprise inspections of hostels, besides infrastructure like CCTV cameras and posters to raise awareness.

Regrettably, it has taken the UGC 15 years to comply with the SC's 2009 directive on setting up committees at the local level, designed to give students a sense of security. The court's directions were part of the judgment in the Aman Kachroo ragging case of 2009, pursued by his father Dr Raj Kachroo. The SC recommended that every institution must have an Anti-Ragging Committee and an Anti-Ragging Squad, and also sought to sensitise all college staffers, be they administrative or contract labour, to report any untoward incidents. There have been cases of college authorities attempting to downplay ragging cases and muffling student voices in a bid to protect the institution's reputation. Notably, ragging is an activity common among males—of the 1,240 ragging cases reported in the past year, 82 percent involved boys. Whether bullying as a form of socialisation is accepted among boys is moot, but when it crosses a certain line, authorities should step in. Besides prevention, there should be stringent punishment for students who attack vulnerable juniors; criminal charges should be slapped, instead of limiting the penalty to rustication. It is hoped these measures and doses of counselling will eventually end this campus activity, and parents will be spared the pain of losing young teenagers.

QUICK TAKE

JUST A TÊTE-À-TWEET

GARY Kasparov's lighthearted jab at Rahul Gandhi's comment that he was good at political chess and idolised the Russian grandmaster caused a mini tweetstorm. Kasparov, now a democracy activist, replied on X that Rahul would first have to win Rae Bareli. Things got so heated he had to clarify the tête-a-tweet was made in jest. The Indian twitterati seem oblivious that former world champion recently also called D Gukesh "the Indian earthquake" after the 17-year-old broke his record as the youngest world championship challenger. Let's focus on chess, celebrate the win with gusto and support the sport in India.

While the immediate reason for rabble rousing over the island is due to the polls, there are other factors at play, like the possible threat of China using it to extend control in the Indian Ocean

KATCHATHEEVU IN HEADLINES AGAIN AFTER 5 DECADES

DILRUKSHI HANDUNNETTI
Award-winning journalist and lawyer. She is a founder and director of the Colombo-based Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR)

As India's economic influence continues to grow on Sri Lanka, shards of mistrust resurface, reflecting the contentious nature of India-Sri Lanka relations that had seen highs and lows from time to time. But the latest row, a spat over Katchatheevu, an uninhibited island lying between India and Sri Lanka, clearly had one more reason besides political expediency during election time.

The BJP recently hit out at the Congress for handing over an important island half a century ago, situated closer to Rameswaram than to Sri Lanka's Jaffna. While looking to score political brownie points as Tamil Nadu went to poll, the BJP also riled Tamil Nadu's DMK for not doing enough to safeguard the rights of Tamils and tweeted that DMK's silence over Katchatheevu was telling and their callousness has harmed the interests of Tamil Nadu's fisherfolk. The Congress has accused the BJP of creating a false narrative on the 1974 Indo-Sri Lanka Maritime Agreement, through which Indira Gandhi ceded the island to Colombo.

The island historically belonged to the Ramnad Zamindari, established in 1605, which altogether comprised 69 coastal villages and 11 islands, including Katchatheevu. Records claim the island was a revenue source, thus establishing a historical claim over the island. Sri Lanka's claim had been that the St Anthony's church, the only structure on the uninhabited island, on the island belongs to the Jaffna Diocese and since 1921, Katchatheevu was under British Ceylon, strengthening its claim over the island.

In 1976, when the maritime boundary line in the Sethusamudram region was divided between the two nations, the adjoining sea expanse including the disputed island fell within Sri Lanka's maritime jurisdiction. Unlike the present day, when every inch of land gives rise to a battle cry or rhetoric, in the early 1970s when the island was ceded, priority was accorded to the maintenance of healthy relations with a neighbour over creating a dispute over territory. In turn, Indian fishermen continue to have the right to access and dry their fishnets and each year, have access to the island for two days of the year when a religious festival to celebrate St Anthony, the patron saint of fishing communities.

But such politics are rare today. Responding to Premier Modi's rousing statement over the island, Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Ali Sabry said the matter was resolved fifty years ago and there was no reason to reopen the discussion.

SOURAV ROY

While the immediate reason for rabble rousing over Katchatheevu is due to the elections, there are other reasons at play, analysts say. Given half a chance, India would still like to reacquire the island, not simply to protect the fishing rights of the Tamil Nadu fisher community but also to extend Delhi's writ over more landmass. It can reduce the number of fishermen daily getting arrested as well. There would be definite political and reputational benefits if the island was brought under Delhi's rule, but at this moment, Katchatheevu offers an opportunity to get even with political opponents in a state where the BJP does not enjoy a significant support base.

What other reasons lie behind the impassioned statements? Besides access, Katchatheevu is important to India for reasons beyond politics. It has cultural, religious, geographical and geopolitical significance. Indian fishermen also pray at St Anthony's shrine and seek his blessings. Beyond the feel-good factors, analysts identify the foremost reason to redevelop an interest in Katchatheevu is to contain China's expanding footprint in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). In this context, the little island between Rameswaram and Jaffna assumes new strategic significance.

At present, India's relations with the Maldives, Nepal and Bangladesh remain strained. Following the fiscal crisis in Sri Lanka, India played a critical role in supporting the nation, yet Colombo's romance with Beijing is far from over, even if it is akin to a forced marriage now as the island nation sinks into deeper debt. China has strategic presence in many parts of Sri Lanka. The island's economic vulnerabilities stem from multiple reasons, including corruption and government inefficiency, but the business model of Chinese infrastructure projects and the inflexibility in debt restructuring are proof Colombo is going to be under Beijing's sphere of influence for many years to come.

As many South Asian countries including Sri Lanka gravitate towards China for infrastructure funding, especially in the IOR, Delhi's discomfort continues to grow. If left unopposed, there is an element of fear that Katchatheevu area too could come under China's growing influence, finding a base on Sri Lanka's soil. This possibility is never too far off from the minds of Tamil Nadu politicians, who fear Chinese presence affecting the fishing activities of Indian fishers who have the right of access to Katchatheevu.

What's hardly explained is that Katchatheevu was not handed over to Sri Lanka on a platter, or made possible due to a great friendship between the two women who were leading India and Sri Lanka at the time, Indira Gandhi and Sirimavo Bandaranaike. The little island was ceded 50 years ago to settle a contentious maritime boundary. The India-Sri Lanka International Maritime Boundary Line was delineated in 1974, followed by a 1976 agreement that demarcated the Gulf of Mannar and the Bay of Bengal. Through the 1976 arrangement, the Wadge Bank, located near Cape Comorin, fell within India's Exclusive Economic Zone, ensuring India possibly got more out of these agreements than Colombo did. At the same time, both countries benefited from amicably settling the maritime boundary, paving the way for stronger India-Sri Lanka relations at the time. The agreements also addressed a range of rights including fishing activities between the two nations, in particular, protecting Indian fishers' rights.

Besides the right to dry fishing nets and visit Katchatheevu as pilgrims, there was an agreement to allow free movement of vessels in the Palk Strait. What fell into a grey area was fishing rights, giving rise to a continuing problem with Indian fishers being arrested by Lankan authorities. The 1976 agreement barred Indian fishermen from fishing in Sri Lankan waters, though the maritime violations continue.

Yet, the BJP's call for retrieval is not as simple as protecting Tamil Nadu fishers' rights. It is about the possibility of Katchatheevu at some point of time being used to exert China's influence over the Indian Ocean region.

(Views are personal)
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THE SAINT BEHIND 30 PERCENT OF KASHMIRI IDIOMS & PROVERBS

RENUKA NARAYANAN
FAITHLINE

To take up from last week, I would like to share stories about Lal Ded, an outstanding figure in Kashmiri tradition from the mid-14th century. We are told 'Lalla', meaning 'seeker', was married off young, at the age of 12.

Cherished as Lalleshwari by Kashmiri Pandits and as Lal Ded or Lalla Arifa by Kashmiri Muslims, she is said to have been born in 1355 CE at Pandrethan (Puranadhisthana), about 12 km southeast of Srinagar, to a Kashmiri Pandit family. Lalla fell into the classic 'feeble husband-hostile mother-in-law' trap that unfortunately needs no elaboration even today. As is still the practice in some old-fashioned families, Lalla was given a new name by her in-laws; a total leaving behind of original identity.

'Padmavati' was made to do the hardest work and not fed properly. The story goes her mother-in-law would place a big stone on Lalla's plate and cover it with rice to make it look like a heap of food. Lalla, who ate last as the one with the least status, would patiently wash the stone daily and put it back in the kitchen. Her father-in-law found out and reproved his wife, but it only made things worse. The mother-in-law poisoned her son's ears, and further unkindness followed. The poor girl had to accept the prospect of spending her life loveless.

But when Lalla was 26, some breaking point was finally reached, for she just walked away from her 'family'. Like Mahadevi Akka of Karnataka two hundred years earlier, she wandered around naked. She discovered a guru in the yogi Siddhi Srikanth and kept the company of renunciates and spiritual seekers. It is also said Lalla was taught spiritual matters by Nund Reshi, the influential Kashmiri saint who was an embodiment of Hindu-Muslim confluence. She eventually found meaning in life through her love for Shiva.

Lalla patiently endured human cruelty, pleaded to Shiva for relief and finally found him in all creation, as her poems show. I was helped in these translations back in 2000 by a Kashmiri Pandit friend who did the literal translation, which I then edited, amid her howls of mirth at my attempts to pronounce Kashmiri. I have transliterated here to share a sense of this faraway language, and any mistakes are wholly mine.

Lalla's *vaakhs* initially have a sorrowful, accepting tone as in *Tsaalun chu vuzmal t'trattuh/Tsaalun chu mandyin'yuh gattuh kaar/Tsalun chu paan-panun kaddun gratt'eh/Heytim'meul santush vat'e pann'y*, meaning 'Endure the lightning and thunder/ Endure the darkness at noon/ Endure the grinding millstone (of earthly life/ Endure, for He comes to you.'

It transforms into recognising 'God-within' as in *Tsal' tsitt' vwandas bay' mo ber/ Chon tsinnth karaan paanuh Anaad/Ts'e kawuh zaanyuh khyod hari kar/Kival t'sa tsaandh'yuh taaruk naad*, meaning 'Fear not, O vagrant mind/ Eternal God takes

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

> Lalleshwari fell into the classic 'feeble husband-hostile mother-in-law' trap once she was married off at 12. She bore the abuse till she turned 26, when she reached a breaking point. She walked away from her 'family' to live spiritually

care of you/ Cry then, to Him alone/ Cross (the Sea of Samsara) by His Name alone.'

She appeals to this greater power with *Shiv yuh Keshav yuh Zin yuh/ Kamalajanaath namaadhaarin yuh/Meh abali kaastan bhavaraoz/Su vuh su vuh su vuh su*, meaning 'Shiva or Keshava or Jina? Or the lotus-born lord, Brahma? Whatever be his Name, Let him lift the world's sickness from me, Be it He, or He or He.'

She reaches a place of acceptance and clarity with *Mail vwandi zolum Jigar morum/Tel' lal naav draam/Yel'uh dal'uh treiv'mas tat'e*, meaning 'I burnt the dirt in my soul, I killed my wayward heart, I spread my beggar's cloth to Him. And so is Lalla known.' She gradually attains the sensation that 'God is in all things and all things belong to God' and says, *A'ndariy aayas tsa'ndru'y gihraan/Gihraan aayas hiheyn hih/ T'suh h'eu Naraan, t'suh h'eu Naraan/ T'suh h'eu Naraan, yim kam vuh?* Meaning 'I searched within for the Moon (of Revelation), As like seeks out like: This is God, this is God, this is God, none else but God. What are these many things (made by You)?'

This is further expressed in verses of serene conviction like this: *Shiv tsu'y thali thali rozan/Mo zan Hindu to Musalman/ Rukaychuk pan panun parzanav/Soy chay Shivas sati zaniy zan* meaning 'Shiva pervades every place and thing; Do not say this is Hindu, that, Muslim; You are intelligent, recognise yourself; That is true kinship with God.' Soon after this realisation happens, Lalla goes about the countryside trying to wean people away from the cruelty of ossified religious practice to the liberating and kindly path of true spirituality.

My favourite is *Lal b' tsaayas swaman baagabaras/Vuchum Shivas-Shakth milith t'vaah/ Tati lay karmas amritsaras/Zind' maras t'me kari kyah?* Meaning, 'I, Lalla, entered blooming garden of my own mind, There I joyfully beheld Shiva united with Shakti. There then did I merge in the Lake of Nectar. Alive, I am unchained from birth and death: What can the world do to me?'

This very Upanishadic *vaakh* goes: *Gagan tsu'y bhutal tsu'y/ Tsu'y chuk deyn pavan ta raat/Arg tsandun posh poyni tsu'y/ Tsu'y chuk soruy ta lagizi kyah?* Meaning 'You are the sky, you are the earth, the air, the hours, the sacrificial grain; You are the water, the sandal paste and flowers; You are already in everything. What shall I worship you with?' It is like a prelude to *Gagan mein thaal rav chand deepak*, which is Guru Nanak's similar, fabulous arati.

Finally, Lalla's deeply Upanishadic message sketches Eternity for us: *As'suhs/ As'si/ T'as'asav*, meaning 'We were, We shall be, We have always been'. Her message: 'Eternally, the sun sets to rise, Eternally, Shiva dissolves to create.'

Her precise date of death is unknown; it's said she died in Bijbehara. Over thirty percent of Kashmiri idioms and proverbs are said to derive from her *vaakhs*.

(Views are personal)
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MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Unbiased functioning

Ref: *Partisanship makes ECI an election omission* (May 5). It is the onerous duty of the ECI as per Article 324 of the Constitution to oversee the election and ensure it is free and fair. It is a gigantic task to conduct elections for 100 crore people in a peaceful way, so it is important to let the body function in an unbiased manner.
Haribandhu Panigrahi, Tarbha

Frank views

Tamil YouTuber 'Savukku' Shankar is known for his free and frank views. His remarks were always meant to bring the wrongdoings of the government to public view. Instead of making enquiries into the serious allegations pointed out by him, arresting him on vague grounds of 'remarks against cops' shows the intentions of the government. People will be afraid of freely expressing their views.
S Retnaswamy, Chennai

Unfulfilled promises

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee's remarks against PM Narendra Modi that the promises of "good days" made earlier are yet to be fulfilled is right. I wonder on what basis he is talking about the same guarantees when he failed to fulfil them even after ten years.
Syed Amjad Ali, Secunderabad

Congress hypocrisy

In reference to Priyanka Gandhi asking why PM Modi didn't contest and get elected from Gujarat, she seems to forget that he did get elected from the state in 2014. Incidentally, he has not run away from his constituency after defeat like Rahul Gandhi. Did she ask her brother why he contested from Wayanad?
Shreeram Paranjape, Bengaluru

Constituency cheated

Rahul Gandhi can avoid Amethi and contest from Rae Bareli. After all, he has chosen the place represented by his mother to prove voters' continued loyalty to his family. But contesting from a second constituency without taking Wayanad voters into confidence borders on cheating the latter. It's like promising one girl to marry her, and subsequently entering into a relationship with another!
Geetha B K, Kannur

Right message

The Telangana High Court's emphasis that the SBI needs to maintain parity in awarding punishments to its delinquent staff highlights avoidable chinks in the framework of the bank's disciplinary proceedings. The bank's primary object of punishment is to send the right message to others to prevent a recurrence of such events in the organisation.
D V Sankara Rao, Hyderabad

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POSTS OF THE DAY

Kiren Rijiju @KirenRijiju
Congress hasn't yet disclosed details of the MoU signed between Congress & Communist Party of China. The then Defence Minister A.K. Anthony ji openly admitted policy of not developing our border areas.

Mallikarjun Kharge @kharge
Deeply pained by the cowardly terror attack on the IAF vehicle in Poonch, Jammu & Kashmir.

Jairam Ramesh @Jairam_Ramesh
The self-proclaimed Chanakya is shamelessly saying that "no one dares to pelt stones now" in Jammu and Kashmir.

In Kolkata Dialogues, BJP's West Bengal chief hits out at ruling Trinamool for lack of development in the state

'PM charisma will change scenario'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kolkata

BJP West Bengal state president Sukanta Majumdar during the Kolkata Dialogues

WEST Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar exudes confidence that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's charisma would help the party transform the "losing seats into winning seats" in West Bengal.

He also asserts that the saffron party will increase its share of seats in the state from the current 18.

Taking part in the Kolkata Dialogues, an initiative of this newspaper, he said the BJP's ground-level workers' strength has increased considerably since 2014, and that the BJP is the only alternative before the people of West Bengal.

"The only alternative before the people of West Bengal is BJP," he said, adding that for more than 40 years, starting with the Left Front government, the state has not seen any substantial development in terms of industrial expansion. "There has not been any job creation," he said.

"The need of the hour is to create more jobs for the people. In Bengal I see many graduates plying e rickshaws and if you interact with them, you will come to know that there are no jobs," he said. "What is happening is that politics is governing society. Society should govern politics," he said

When asked whether BJP is a non-Bengali party – as the Opposition labels it an outsider-- Majumder said: "My daughter studies in a Bengali medium school. I am not a vegetarian. My past president Dilip Ghosh also likes fish. So is JP Nadda. This whole issue of BJP being a vegetarian and a non-Bengali party is absurd. We have felt the pulse of Bengal and we are gearing up to increase our seat share in the state."

The BJP leader said the state needed a clear-cut industrial policy, which the TMC government has failed to provide. He dubbed the TMC government "corrupt," saying it was bent on misleading people.

To a question relating to a TMC sting video showing a Sandeshkhali BJP functionary admitting that many of the charges, including that of rape, were leveled following instructions from party leaders, including Suvendu Adhikari, Majumdar replied, "It is not clear whether the video is fake." A local BJP leader Gangadhar Kayl is purported to have been quoted in the video. He has filed a complaint with the Central Bureau of Investigation, claiming manipulation of the video through Artificial Intelligence (AI). To another query, Majumdar said all demands of the Matua community and the Gorkhas will be fulfilled by the BJP government in due course of time.

> **The need of the hour is to create more jobs for the people. In Bengal I see many graduates plying e rickshaws and if you interact with them, you will come to know that there are no jobs**
>
> Sukanta Majumdar, West Bengal BJP president

'People should think beyond dole politics'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kolkata

PANELISTS participating in the Kolkata Dialogues believe that that dole politics plays an important role in elections in every state and that this Lok Sabha election is not an exception. CPM candidate from South Kolkata Saira Shah Halim, said in a state where joblessness is high, there is a need to go beyond dole politics.

"We are emphasising that people should think beyond dole politics. This year we are campaigning in such a way that we can emerge as a strong Opposition and in the next Assembly election, we will form the government," said Halim.

Veteran cardiac surgeon Dr Kunal Sarkar, however, felt that this year's Lok Sabha election does not hold any special significance for Bengal as the narratives of all political parties have been more or less the same. "They are all fighting for their own existence."

Political analyst and professor of Political Science at Presidency University Dr Zaad Mahmud felt that although there is a lack of infrastructure, scams and unemployment, "there are still 60% chances of TMC getting an edge because in districts, people are happy with the schemes that has been offered by the ruling Trinamool Congress."

POWER GAMES

SHAHID FARIDI
The writer is Resident Editor TNIE, New Delhi.
Follow him on X@Shahid_Faridi_

Foreign Trouble

MEA PROBES LAND SCAMS BY MISSIONS ABROAD

The Ministry of External Affairs is investigating reports of the purchase of land at inflated prices by its missions abroad. The MEA had asked Indian missions that are housed in rented premises to purchase land and build embassies. The ministry has been informed that the money spent by some of the missions on acquiring real estate was two times and in some cases even three times of the market price. The Comptroller and Auditor General was the first to raise a red flag on these deals. According to sources, the CAG team visited one such country where the Indian embassy had bought land and found grave violations of norms. It also found that the money spent on acquiring land was over two times of the prevailing market price. Similar cases from other countries have reportedly been brought to the MEA's notice. The ministry is now busy investigating the case. It is also looking at the possible involvement of officers from South Block in these deals. Sources said two different teams of the MEA have visited these countries to check the records of these transactions. The MEA is likely to conduct a forensic examination of all the properties acquired by its missions in the last ten years. The ministry's report will soon be submitted to the competent authorities for action.

Fund Crunch

MORE EXITS LIKELY AS CONG EYES WINNABILITY

The cash-strapped Congress has divided the Lok Sabha seats it is contesting in the current Lok Sabha elections into three categories. It has put the most winnable seats in Category A, seats where it has a chance of winning with a good campaign have been put in Category B and seats where it is contesting but has only an outside chance of winning are in Category C. This categorization is done to make optimal utilization of the resources available to the party. The party is focusing its resources on the winning seats. Sources said while the withdrawal by its candidates in Surat and Indore were clear cases of defections, the decision by its Puri candidate Sucharita Mohanti to return the party ticket was a result of Congress' decision not to spend money on seats it is not sure of winning. Mohanti, who has been a working journalist all her life, did not have the resources to fight the election. She returned the party ticket after not getting financial support and being asked to fend for herself. Sources said more exits are likely in the coming days as the party has tightened its purse strings and is focusing all its resources on around 150 seats where it finds itself in the best position to win. Congress has been struggling for funds ever since its accounts were frozen following issues with its returns.

Two phases of LS polls record rise in vulnerable tribal groups' turnout

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @New Delhi

A significant number of 'Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups' (PVTGS) and other tribes participated in the electoral process in the nine states, including Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh and Gujarat.

They reportedly exercised their franchise in large numbers in the first and second phases of the Lok Sabha polls.

Notably, the Sharpen tribe of Great Nicobar participated in the elections after a couple of years of sustained efforts by the Election Commission of India (EC). As per an official source, Madhya Pradesh has three groups of PVTGS, namely Baiga, Bhariya and Sharai, and they were seen casting their vote enthusiastically.

Tribal theme-based polling stations were set up to welcome them at various places. In Karnataka, there are 55,815 PVTGS, of whom 39,498 are registered in electoral rolls. Forty polling stations have been established with unique tribal themes to welcome them.

Kerala has 4,750 PVTGS, of whom 3850 are enrolled as eligible electors through unique campaigns by the EC.

There are 817 tribal voters aged between 80 and 90 in Kerala. In Odisha, 13 PVTGS are having a population of 2,64,972. Of them, 1,84,274 have enrolled as PVTGs. Bihar has only five PVTGs in the tribal population, with a total population of 7,631 in 10 districts. Three thousand one hundred forty-seven have been enrolled in the electoral rolls. Jharkhand has nine tribal categories with a population of 2,58,266. A total of 1 69,288 are registered voters.

In Gujarat, there are five tribal groups spread in 15 districts. Eighty-six thousand seven hundred fifty-five are registered in the electoral rolls to vote in the third phase of polls on May 7.

Tamil Nadu has six groups of PVTGS, and they are 2,26,3000 in number. And out of 1,62,049 adult PVTGS, 1,61,932 are registered electors. There are five PVTGs in Chhattisgarh, with a combined population of 1,86,918 in 18 districts. Of them, 1,20,632 are registered in the electoral rolls.

EC must publish total no of voters, says ex-CEC Quraishi

PREETHA NAIR @New Delhi

AS the Opposition parties and civil society up the ante on delay on the part of the Election Commission in publishing the data of the exact number of voters for the first two phases of the Lok Sabha polls, former Chief Election Commissioner of India Dr **SY Quraishi** said that it is imperative to release the data without any delay. He further said that the EC's action of not disclosing the number of voters cannot be justified on any grounds.

Though the EC released the final voter turnout figures for the first two phases of the Lok Sabha elections on April 30, it has still not published the total number of voters in each constituency. The announcement of the voter turnout came 11 days after the first phase polling on April 19, and four days after the second phase on April 26. According to the poll panel's data, the voter turnout for the first phase of polling was 66.14 percent while the second phase registered 66.71 percent.

The former CEC said that the data should have been published within 24 hours of the polling, which has been the practice till 2014. "The non-disclosure of the number of voters by the EC is not unacceptable. It is important to have the absolute number of voters for transparency and the data should be released within 24 hours. Until 2014, it was the practice. However, problems started cropping up in 2019 and it has been discontinued now, "said Quraishi.

The EC withdrew the four-phase voter turnout data of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections from their website after discrepancies were pointed out between voter turnout and the number of votes counted at least in 347 constituencies.

Jagdeep Chhokar, founder of the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), said, "Voter percentages are meaningless unless the total number of voters is known. There is no conceivable reason for the EC not to publish the number of voters. How can they calculate percent unless they know the numbers? They took 11 days to publish the voter percentage."

In 2019, ADR filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking a probe into alleged discrepancies between voter turnout and the number of votes counted in 347 constituencies in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. "The EC put out clarification on their website that the confirmed figures are given several days after the declaration of results. Ideally, the EC should not declare results unless final figures are available," he said.

Opposition parties including the Congress, CPI(M), and TMC questioned the ECI for not publishing the data on registered voters in each constituency and the constituency-wise voting percentage. Raising apprehensions of "manipulation of results", CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said that the total voter numbers can be altered at the time of counting. He added that the total number of voters in each constituency was available on the ECI website till 2014 and the commission must be transparent and put out this data.

"I'm talking of the absolute number of registered voters in each constituency, not the number of polled votes which will be known only after postal ballots are counted. Why is the total number of voters in each constituency not being put out?," he added.

Soren to attend uncle's last rites under police custody after HC nod

MUKESH RANJAN @Ranchi

FORMER chief minister **Hemant Soren**, currently under judicial custody after being arrested by ED in a money laundering case linked to a land scam, will attend the last rites of his uncle under police custody on Monday. Refusing to grant him provisional bail on Friday, the Jharkhand High Court had allowed Soren to attend the last rites for a few hours under police custody.

The court had said that while attending the rituals, Soren would neither talk to the media nor hold any political discussion. Soren, currently lodged in Birsa Munda Central jail after being arrested on January 31, had approached the High Court for provisional bail after the Special PMLA Court in Ranchi refused to grant him the same.

The Jharkhand HC also dismissed Soren's petition challenging his arrest by the ED in the money laundering case.

JMM patriarch Shibu Soren's elder brother Rajaram Soren passed away following prolonged on April 28.

JMM insiders said that Hemant's wife Kalpana Soren will also be present during the 'Shraddha' ritual to be observed at the native place of Shibu Soren. Kalpana is campaigning extensively for Gandey Assembly bypoll and is camping there after filing her nomination from the seat on April 29.

"Kalpana Soren will also be attending the ritual giving a break to the ongoing campaigning for Gandey Assembly bypoll to be held on May 20," said a JMM insider.

Meanwhile, the PMLA court is scheduled to pronounce its decision on May 13 on the regular bail petition filed by Soren. Written responses from Hemant Soren and ED have already been submitted in the PMLA Court of Rajiv Ranjan on Saturday. After hearing arguments from both sides, the court has reserved its judgment and will pronounce it on May 13. The case pertains to an alleged scam involving 8.86 acres of land in a posh area of Ranchi.

'Can't talk to media'

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All children should receive formal education: NCPCR to states

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @New Delhi

THE National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has directed all states to ensure that children in the age group of six to 14 years should be enrolled in neighbourhood schools and receive formal education.

In a letter to state chief secretaries, NCPCR Chief Priyank Kanoongo, said that the states should also ensure that in cases where it is found that money is being raised in name of children and children are illegally transported from one place to another, authorities should take action under the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code.

His letter came after the Uttar Pradesh authorities rescued many children who were being unlawfully transported across state borders.

Citing an incident of April 26, the NCPCR chief said that 95 children were rescued while allegedly being illegally transported from Bihar to Uttar Pradesh. Investigations found that the children were attending an unregistered madrasa in the Saharanpur district in Uttar Pradesh.

He said that the children informed the authorities that they were coerced into carrying brick, cleaning toilets, and endured physical and mental abuse.

"Instead of attending formal schools, these children were confined to the madrasa. It appears that in name of religious education, the children are deprived of their fundamental rights given under the Constitution of India and the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009," he said in a letter, which was also marked to Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Chairmans of Airport Authority of India and Railway Board and to all state Director Generals of Police.

He asked the states to issue necessary directions to the District Collector/Magistrate to enhance vigilance in their respective districts to prevent the illegal transportation of children between locations.

Additionally, he said, the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU), AntiHuman Trafficking Unit (AHTU), and Special Juvenile Police Units (SJPU) should be instructed to conduct routine inspections and monitoring to deter such occurrences.

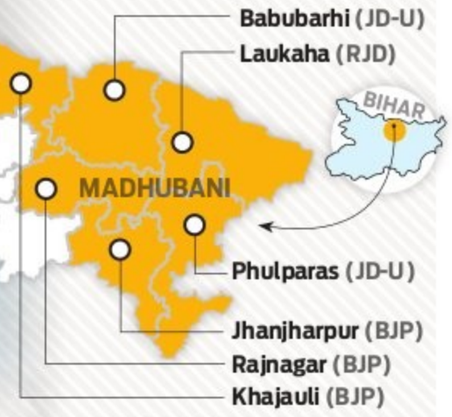
He said the compliance of these recommendations should be sent to the Commission within 15 days of issue of the letter.

MANY CHILDREN WHO WERE BEING UNLAWFULLY TRANSPORTED ACROSS STATE BORDERS WERE RESCUED

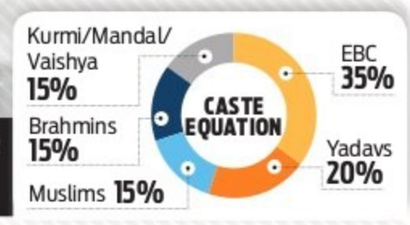
INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	40	27	Mumbai	33	28
Bhopal	39	26	Panaji	33	27
Jaipur	41	28	Patna	38	27
Amritsar	41	23	Lucknow	41	26
Chennai	37	31	Port Blair	33	27
Kolkata	34	28	Imphal	26	18
Srinagar	26	12	Chandigarh	40	24

BSP factor, RJD rebel puzzle big players in Bihar

NDA dominance in Madhubani's Jhanjharpur faces challenge from RJD rebel strongman



TOTAL ELECTORATE	MALE VOTERS	FEMALE VOTERS	THIRD GENDER
20,03,040	10,45,444	9,57,507	89



	2019 ELECTION	2014 ELECTION
Winner	Ramprit Mandal (JD(U)	Birendra Kumar Chaudhary (BJP)
Votes secured	6,02,391	3,35,481
Runner-up	Gulab Yadav (RJD)	Mangani Lal Manda (RJD)
Votes secured -up	2,79,440	2,80,073
Voter turn-out	57.35%	56.4%

Key issues: Unemployment, Migration and Lack of Development

KEY CANDIDATES IN 2014 POLLS

Ramprit Mandal (JD(U)

Suman Kumar Mahaseth (VIP)

Gulab Yadav (BSP)

Surhi caste, a sub-caste of the Vaishya community, who are mainly supporters of NDA. His main rival, Mandal, is a Dhanuk. Gulab with RJD background, may prove a headache for Mahaseth.

Suman is the most educated among the three leading contenders in the fray. He has a BA and LLB degree, while Mandal (68) is a 10th pass and started his political journey from the grassroots level. He had secured 58% of the votes polled to defeat Gulab by over 3.2 lakh votes in 2019. Overall voter turnout in the 2019 Lok Sabha election stood at 57.35%.

The constituency is still struggling with the menace of unemployment and migration. Perennial floods caused by Kamla Balan during rainy seasons have added woes to the people of the constituency. "Kamla Balan river is a bane for the residents here," said Bipin Mandal, a resident of Jhanjharpur town. With over 18 lakh voters, the seat comprises six assembly segments—Phulparas, Khajauli, Jhanjharpur, Laukaha, Babubarhi and Rajnagar.

Flood, migration and lack of development are the main issues of the constituency, which has almost 20% Yadavs, followed by 15% Brahmins and 35% Extremely Backward Classes. Muslims also have 15% of the votes in this constituency, while the Vaisya community shares almost equal votes.

Vaishyas play a crucial role in the victory of any candidate in the constituency. Ranjan Kumar, a resident of Laukaha, said that the biggest issue in this election is unemployment. "Jo rozgar dega hum usi ko vote dengue (those who will provide jobs, we will vote for them)," he said while showing his displeasure over the lack of development in the constituency.

However, Mohan Kumar Mahaseth, a confidante of the VIP candidate, claimed that Gulab's presence wouldn't impact the electoral prospects of grand alliance candidates," he asserted. On the other hand, Ratneshwar Mandal, a BA student, claimed that sitting MP Mandal would retain the seat. "It's just a matter of margin of victory. The margin will be higher this time as Gulab Yadav is in the fray as a BSP candidate," he added. He claimed that there are 60% EBC and Backward Classes votes besides 3.25 lakh Brahmins, 2.5 lakh Yadavs, 2 lakh Kurmi/Mandal, one lakh Kewat (fishermen) and 1.25% Vaishya voters in Jhanjharpur.

VIP candidate Suman's anti-incumbency would benefit him. "People are angry with the sitting MP, and I enjoy the support of all sections of society," he added. However, Raman Kumar, a social worker, said anti-incumbency and Gulab Yadav were the two main hurdles in MP Mandal's second straight victory.

Nikam takes on Cong's Gaikwad

If Mumbai is "mini India", then the Mumbai North Central Lok Sabha seat is "mini Mumbai", home to celebrities living in posh areas like Bandra and Khar as well as migrants and labourers living in the bylanes of Kurla. Nikam is making his poll debut against the Congress' Mumbai unit chief and Dharavi MLA Varsha Gaikwad.

'Crorepati' names in Assam polls

Altogether 15 candidates out of the 47 in the fray for the four constituencies in Assam are 'crorepatis', with the richest being AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal contesting from the Dhubri seat. The candidates include two each from Congress and AGP, one each from BJP, AIUDF, BPF, UPPL, TMC , CPI(M) and Ekam Sanatn Bharat.

POCKET BOROUGHS

Priyanka to steer Amethi, Rae Bareli campaigning

PREETHA NAIR @New Delhi

DAYS after Congress announced the candidature of its former party chief Rahul Gandhi from Rae Bareli and K L Sharma from Amethi, party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra would spearhead the Lok Sabha campaign for both seats, considered as the pocket boroughs of the Nehru-Gandhi family.

According to sources, a blueprint for the campaign has been laid out in a meeting of the top leaders on Sunday in the capital. The poll campaign will kick off on Monday. With two weeks left for the election to both seats, the party has limited time for campaigning, said leaders. A senior leader said that Priyanka Gandhi will be staying at a guest house in Rae Bareli to oversee the campaigns.

"She will hold 'nukkad sabhas', meetings, and door-to-door campaign programs. From booth management to outreach, everything would be handled by her," said a leader. With its INDIA bloc ally Samajwadi Party (SP) cadres extending support in the two seats, the party may also hold a joint rally of the bloc.

Though it was widely speculated that Priyanka would make her electoral debut in Rae Bareli, a constituency held by her mother Sonia Gandhi for the last two decades, the Congress party ended the suspense on Friday by fielding Rahul Gandhi from the seat. Sources said Priyanka chose to opt out of the poll fray in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, as she was keen to focus more on campaigning for party at the national level.

As Priyanka has been working in Amethi and Rae Bareli since 2004, she has established an emotional connection with the people in both constituencies, said a leader adding that she will be an effective campaigner for the seats. She will take charge of the digital and social media campaign.

Priyanka to not contest, focus on campaigning

When asked about Priyanka's absence from the electoral fray, AICC general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "Priyanka is campaigning vigorously and is single-handedly silencing Narendra Modi's lies. The way she responded to the canards that the PM was spreading on the abolition of estate duty in March 1985 was a stinging rebuke. That is why she needed not to be limited to just one constituency. She is campaigning across the country. Today, Smriti Irani's only identity is that she contests elections from Amethi against Rahul Gandhi. Instead of making meaningless statements, Irani will now have to answer about local development," he said.

INDORE

Voices for NOTA rise in Indore as Cong candidate withdraws

ANURAAG SINGH @Bhopal

FORMER Lok Sabha speaker and senior BJP leader Sumitra Mahajan has expressed surprise over the withdrawal of nomination by Congress candidate Akshay Kanti Bam from Indore Lok Sabha seat, embarrassing the ruling party.

Mahajan (81), who won the Indore seat for the BJP eight times in a row between 1989 and 2014, informed about getting phone calls from prominent people of Indore, who are saying they will vote for NOTA and not the BJP on May 13.

"I was surprised, unable to understand till now why it happened. In my 35 years of electoral politics in Indore, never has such an incident happened. Our candidate and MP was poised to win the seat by a big margin. Then what was the need for it to happen?" Mahajan told reporters in Indore.

She also questioned the inclusion of Bam in the BJP within hours after withdrawal of papers on April 29. "We can't decline anybody who wants to join the party. But it always needs to be kept in mind that as the party grows bigger due to new people, its quality and structure of the organisation is maintained.

In Indore we've defeated many powerful Congress leaders in elections; the current Congress candidate wasn't that big, then why did it happen?" Mahajan asked.

While declining to comment on Congress's call to people of Indore to vote for NOTA to teach BJP a lesson, she said, "I'm getting phone calls from respectable and prominent citizens of Indore, who're saying what happened isn't good. They are saying that they won't vote for the BJP, but instead press the NOTA option on the EVM. I'm convincing them by telling them that it's the Congress candidate who has changed his mind and not the BJP candidate."

MP minister and local MLA Kailash Vijayvargiya is believed to have played a key role in the April 29 incident. Defending his decision to withdraw nomination, Bam said, "I withdrew the papers as the party organisation wasn't supporting me on the ground. I was forced to cancel campaigning on many days due to the party's non-cooperation."

He, however, refused to comment on Mahajan's statements. Taking a dig at Congress's call for voting for NOTA, Bam said, "Why didn't the Congress make efforts to ensure that Moti Singh Patel's nomination papers weren't rejected. Why are they not asking people to vote for any of the 14 candidates left in the fray, except BJP candidate?"

Questions Bam's inclusion in BJP

Senior BJP leader Sumitra Mahajan questioned the inclusion of Bam in the BJP within hours after withdrawal of papers on April 29. "We can't decline anybody who wants to join the party. But it always needs to be kept in mind that as the party grows bigger due to new people, its quality and structure of the organisation is maintained. Mahajan informed about getting phone calls from prominent people, who are saying they will vote for NOTA and not BJP

VOTING ON TUESDAY

Gujarat campaign shifts to door-to-door canvassing

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @Ahmedabad

WITH Gujarat going to Lok Sabha elections on Tuesday, campaign ended on Sunday evening and candidates will now shift their focus to door-to-door canvassing. Meanwhile, concerns are raised over voting percentage due to the scorching heat.

Parties are calling for early voting and the Election Commission has issued guidelines to manage potential heat wave conditions.

This time the election atmosphere in Gujarat remained relatively subdued. Apart from speeches by Prime Minister Modi and the Rupala-Kshatriya controversy, there has been minimal fervour in the elections. Following BJP candidate Mukesh Dalal's uncontested victory in the Surat Lok Sabha seat, attention now turns to the general elections for Gujarat's 25 Lok Sabha seats. Voting will take place for five assembly seats from 7 am to 5 pm on Tuesday.

During his two-day visit to Gujarat, Modi addressed 8 meetings. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president JP Nadda, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman addressed meetings. From the Congress camp, Rahul Gandhi held rallies in Patan and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra addressed gatherings in the Valsad and Banaskantha seats. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and ex-Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot participated in meetings.

NO FEAR FACTOR

Poll fervour makes a comeback in Srinagar after 3 decades

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

THERE is a marked change in the political atmosphere and political scene in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir in this Lok Sabha polls, the first major electoral exercise in J&K after Article 370 abrogation.

After nearly three decades, the bustle for polls has returned in both uptown and downtown areas of Srinagar. Contesting candidates are openly holding poll rallies and corner meetings in the sensitive downtown areas which, in past, used to be no-go areas for the mainstream leaders. The National Conference, PDP and Apni Party have been holding election campaigns in both the uptown and sensitive downtown areas of Srinagar.

The Srinagar Lok Sabha seat, which is spread over five districts — Srinagar, Budgam, Ganderbal in central Kashmir and Pulwama and Shopian in south Kashmir, will go to polls on May 13.

A total of 24 candidates are in the fray for the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat but the main contest is between NC's Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, PDP's Waheed-ur-Rehman Para and Apni Party's Mohammad Ashraf Mir. Unlike the past when poll campaigning used to be a very low key affair, this time the poll fever has gripped the summer capital as well. The parties and the contesting candidates are freely canvassing both in the uptown and volatile downtown areas to garner public support.

Former J&K Chief Minister and NC vice president Omar Abdullah today addressed a well attended poll rally in Hawal area of downtown Srinagar. The party workers and participants were waving the NC flags. The Hawal is part of volatile downtown Srinagar and many encounters and militancy incidents had taken place in the past in the area.

It is not the only rally addressed by Omar or NC leader in downtown Srinagar in this election.

"We have held a series of poll rallies both in uptown and downtown Srinagar. We held rallies in Habba Kadal, Khanyar and Hawal in downtown and Batwara, Chanapora and many other areas in Srinagar," NC spokesman Imran Nabi Dar told this newspaper.

"There is great enthusiasm among the people and they are eager to cast their votes. People are not able to vent their anger over Article 370 abrogation and they want to show their anger through their votes," Imran said. The venue of every poll rally or corner meeting is decorated with buntings and flags of political parties and posters of contesting candidates and their leaders.

"There is no fear among the contesting candidates this time. The candidates are openly canvassing without any public rallies, corner meetings and door to door campaigns. They campaign even during the evening hours," said PDP secretary Abduled Hameed Kohsheen. "People are welcoming us wholeheartedly. We held poll rallies in Haba Kadal, Zadibal, Chanapora and some other areas of Srinagar," he said.

Due to boycott politics, Srinagar LS seat had recorded only 15.6% turnout in 2019 polls with Srinagar spread over 8 Assembly seats recording only 7.7% polling. However, both Kosheen and Imran said due to enthusiasm among the people, they are expecting greater participation of people in polls this time. Both say the voter turnout will be higher than previous years.

4
Persons are critically injured in a shooting incident in Los Angeles

GLOBAL WEATHER
LR: Light Rain • WI: Windy • HR: Heavy Rain • SN: Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	26	15	SNY	Los Angeles	21	12	SNY
Colombo	34	28	SNY	Melbourne	19	9	SNY
Dhaka	34	24	LR	Moscow	11	2	LC
Dubai	33	28	SNY	New York	22	14	LC
Houston	29	25	LC	Singapore	31	27	LR
Istanbul	19	10	SNY	Toronto	18	9	SNY
London	16	10	LR	Washington	13	7	LR

Hopes dim as Cairo 'talks' end without deal

Israel vows military operation in Rafah in near future; Netanyahu shuts down Al Jazeera operations in country

JERUSALEM

THE latest round of Gaza ceasefire talks ended in Cairo after "in-depth and serious discussions," the Hamas militant group said Sunday, reiterating key demands that Israel again rejected. After earlier signs of progress, the outlook appeared to dim as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to resist international pressure to halt the war.

Israel closed its main crossing point for delivering badly needed humanitarian aid for Gaza after Hamas attacked it. Defense Minister Yoav Gallant claimed Hamas wasn't serious about a deal and warned of "a powerful operation in the very near future in Rafah and other places across all of Gaza."

Israel didn't send a delegation to the talks mediated by Egypt and Qatar. Egyptian state media reported that the Hamas delegation went for discussions in Qatar, where the group has a political office, and will return to Cairo for further negotiations on Tuesday.

Israeli soldiers drive a tank at a staging ground near the border with the Gaza Strip, in southern Israel on Sunday | AP

Another threat to talks came as Israel ordered the local offices of Qatar's Al Jazeera satellite news network to close, accusing it of broadcasting anti-Israel incitement. The ban did not appear to affect the channel's operations in Gaza or the West Bank. Netanyahu, under pressure from hard-liners in his government, continued to lower expectations for a ceasefire deal, calling the key Hamas demands "extreme" — including the withdrawal of Israel forces from Gaza and an end to the war. That would equal surrender after the Hamas attack on Oct. 7 that triggered the fighting, he said.

Al Jazeera condemned Israel's decision as a "criminal act", and said it would take legal action. The extraordinary order, which includes confiscating broadcast equipment, preventing the broadcast of the channel's reports and blocking its websites, is believed to be the first time Israel has ever shuttered a foreign news outlet operating in the country.

The Gaza war's impact has been increasingly felt around the world as pro-Palestinian university students follow the example of protest encampments in the United States.

The mediators had proposed a 40-day pause in the fighting and an exchange of hostages for Palestinian prisoners, according to details released by Britain.

Qatari, Egyptian and US mediators met the Hamas delegation in Cairo on Saturday before talks resumed Sunday. *AP/AFP*

TOLL SO FAR
36,285

Gaza crossing shut after Hamas attack

Israel closed its main crossing point for delivering humanitarian aid for Gaza on Sunday after Hamas militants attacked it, while the defense minister claimed Hamas wasn't serious about a ceasefire deal and warned of "a powerful operation in the very near future in Rafah." *AP*

Hezbollah fires rockets at N Israel

Hezbollah said it launched dozens of rockets at northern Israel in retaliation for a strike on south Lebanon that a local official said killed a couple and their child. The group said it fired "dozens of Katyusha and Falaq rockets" at Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel in response to the Israelis attack on civilians. *AFP*

Believers lined up for communion after an Easter service in Moscow | AP

As rivals mark Orthodox Easter, Russia kills two

KYIV

A Russian rocket strike on Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region killed two people and drone and bomb attacks on the northeastern city of Kharkiv injured at least a dozen, officials said Sunday.

The strikes came as Orthodox Christians in Ukraine and Russia celebrated Easter, and as Moscow said its forces had captured another village.

"In Pokrovsk, rocket attacks killed two people and damaged a house," Vadim Filashkin, Ukraine's governor of the Donetsk region, said in a post on Telegram.

Pokrovsk is around 60 km northwest of Donetsk city, the Russian-held capital of the region which Moscow claims to have annexed.

In Kharkiv, at least seven people were injured in an aerial attack around lunchtime, mayor Igor Terekhov said in a series of posts on Telegram.

"The strike hit the central part of the city in an area of residential buildings," he said.

Regional Governor Oleg Synegubov said Russia had used a guided aerial bomb in the strike.

Ukraine's air force said Russia fired 24 Iranian-style "Shahed" drones at its territory overnight, 23 of which were shot down.

There appeared to be no letup in the fighting as both countries marked Orthodox Easter.

On the battlefield, Russia's defence ministry said its forces had seized the village of Ocheretyne in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, the latest in a string of small territorial gains for Moscow.

Leaders in both countries have used religion and the influential Orthodox churches to rally society behind the war effort.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky published a video message on Sunday from Kyiv's Saint Sophia Cathedral in the centre of the capital.

An exhibition at the cathedral features religion icons painted on ammunition boxes.

In Russia, President Vladimir Putin did not explicitly mention the war – that Russia calls a "special military operation" – in his Easter message. *AFP*

Protesters leaves USC campus after arrest threat

WASHINGTON

STUDENTS protesting the ongoing war in Gaza left a pro-Palestinian encampment at the University of Southern California (USC) early Sunday after they were surrounded by police and told they could face arrest if they didn't go.

The move, days before commencement was set to begin, came after the university said campus safety officers, assisted by the Los Angeles Police Department, were clearing the area. "If you are in the center of campus, please leave. People who don't leave could be arrested," USC said on X at 4.15 am.

Livestream video from student journalists showed the encampment had emptied out as police formed a line to move remaining protesters away and stop people from re-entering.

The encampment had restarted after the LAPD first arrested 93 people on April 24. The atmosphere on the private university campus had largely remained calm since, while attention turned to arrests at the University of California, LA.

USC, a private university, has been the subject of student protests over the war as well as the administration's decision to cancel a commencement speech by the valedictorian, a Muslim student who had expressed support for Palestinians. The university made that decision last month, citing safety concerns after receiving threats. Some Jewish groups had criticized the student's selection as speaker.

Demonstrators remove belongings from an encampment after police arrived on the campus at the University of Southern California on Sunday | AP

Administrators later canceled the entire main-stage commencement planned for May 10, when 65,000 people were expected to gather. Other commencement activities, including graduation ceremonies for individual schools and colleges, are still scheduled from Thursday through Sunday. *AP*

Bilawal Bhutto set to become Pak foreign minister again

ISLAMABAD

More than Pakistan's former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari is likely to make a comeback for another stint as his Pakistan Peoples Party and the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) were close to finalising a power-sharing deal. Bilawal would join the cabinet of Shehbaz Sharif as foreign minister, the *Express Tribune* newspaper reported on Sunday. They said that an understanding between the party bigwigs was reached recently during their talks.

They claimed that Bilawal, who was initially reluctant to join the cabinet, agreed to become the foreign minister once again. The two sides are now working on the details and the timing of PPP formally joining the cabinet, the paper said.

Citing sources, it said that Shehbaz wanted the PPP to join the cabinet before the next budget to be presented in the first week of June. It is, however, not clear whether the PPP joins the cabinet before or after the budget. One thing is certain: the PPP will be part of the cabinet in June, according to sources. The incumbent foreign minister, Ishaq Dar, was appointed as deputy prime minister to allow room for Bilawal to become the foreign minister.

Sources in the Foreign Office said that Bilawal has proved himself to be an able minister during his previous 16-month stint before the elections, according to the paper. *PTI*

PUBLIC NOTICE

This NOTICE is hereby given that my client Sri. Shankar .G has lost/misplaced the Original mother Deed of Sale in respect of Document No. DSP-1-02289-2009-10, Book No.I, Stored in CD No. DSPD52, Registered on 24.08.2009, in the office Sub-Registered Dasanpur, Bangalore, Property situated at Shivanpura Village, Dasappa Hobli in Respect of Survey No. 97/2A Nine and Half (9½) Guntas out of Fourteen (14) guntas. In respect of Survey No.97/1B Eleven and Half Guntas (11 ½) out of Eighteen (18) guntas, in Respect of Survey No. 97/2B Eight and Half guntas out of Thirteen (13) Guntas Totally measuring Twenty Nine and half Guntas (29½) and same has been bounded on East by Residential Land No. 97, West by Road, North by Dasappa Property and South by Bharathi Property, executed Between Smt. Lakshmamma, Smt. Anuradha, Sri. G. Rajappa, Sri. Kumar .G., Smt. Sarvamangala and Smt. Manjamma and the same is not traceable. A police complaint for the same has been lodged with Bengaluru City, Bengaluru on 03.05.2024 and the same is recorded in Property missing Register at Serial No. 1037635, Lost Report No. 1037635/2024.

All person / persons are hereby informed to put in their claims or interest of objection about the said above referred documents and/or about the said Property or any part thereof, within a period of 15 days along with the sufficient evidence from appearance of this notice.

MANOJ KUMAR .P, Advocate
City Civil Court, Bengaluru,
#119, 2nd Floor, 4th Cross, Behind Mavalli Biryani, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-27.
Date 04.05.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Dinesh Babu .A S/o Anbalagan, Aged about 34 years, Residing at No.233, 7th Cross, Kudlu Main Road, Somasundarapalya, Bengaluru-560102, represented that I am intended to purchase the schedule property from Smt. Vijaya Smapath W/o Samapath.S, residing at No.6, Garden, Rajeev Gandhi Nagar, Bommanahalli, Bangalore South, Bangalore-560068, any person/s, financial institutions and statutory authorities who claims any right, title or interest of any nature in or any lien, charge or enforceable right in relation to the schedule property and or has any objections of any nature to the aforesaid transaction should lodge such claims and/or objections in writing to the undersigned together with supporting documents within in **TEN (10) days** hereof, failing which it will be presumed that no valid claims or objections subsist and I would proceed to complete the transaction with the present owner thereof subject to compliance with other statutory and legal formalities.

SCHEDULE OF THE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Residential Property bearing Vacant Site No.9, Out of Property No.93/2, 93/3, 93/4, & 93/5, Katha No.93/2, Situated at Mylasandra Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, Now comes under Doddathogur Village Panchayat Limits, measuring East to West 57 Feet and North to South On the Eastern Side 28 Feet and On Western Side 48 feet, in all measuring 2166 Square Feet, bounded on the: On the **East By:** Road, **West By:** Private Property; **North By:** Site No.10, **South By:** Private Property.

CONTACT: **DINESH**
233, 7th Cross, Kudlu Main Road
Somasundarapalya, Bengaluru-560102
Mob No.8892538319

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice here by given that my client Sri.Narayanaswamy, Aged about 59 years, S/o. Late Ugrappa, R/at. No. 159, Near Kateramma temple, Byatarayanapura, Sahakaranagar Post, Bangalore-560092 intent to purchase the immovable property described from its owners, Smt. Manjula .K, Sri. K. Srinivasa, Sri. Narasimhamurthy .K, Sri. Ramamurthy .K all are children of Late N.Krishnappa R/at. No 245, 3rd Main Road, Opp. Corporation Park, Ganganagara Layout, Ganganagara, R.T. Nagar, Bangalore - 560032. Any individuals persons / any bank's have any claim on the said property by way of Agreement, ownership, tenancy, license, sale mortgage, exchange, charge, lease, lien, right title or interest by way of inheritance maintenance, possession, gift trust, govt, duties, levies, encumbrances easement or otherwise are requested to informed with the office undersigned of claim against the above said property and shares should send their claims in writing to the undersigned with the office along with documentary evidence in support of the said claim there of with 20 days (Twenty Days) from the date of publication of this notice., failing which my client shall proceed to purchase the schedule property on the basis that there are No Objection / Claims of whatsoever nature with regard to the schedule property.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the Resedential property bearing Site No. 17, BBMP Khatha No. 45/105/2/17, measuring East to West : 31-0 feet, North to South: (44+47)/2 feet, totally measing 1410.50 sq.feet situated at Byatarayanapura Village, Yelahanka Hobli, presently Yelahanka Taluk, previously Bangalore North Taluk and bounded as follows : East by : House No.16 belongs to Dr. Jagadish, West by : Road, North by : House No. 14 belongs to Shetty, South by : Road

G. SURESH, Advocate
 # 25, 8th Main Road,
Channigappa Layout,
Kamakshipalya, Bangalore - 79.
Mobile : 9448710302
Date : 06-05-2024, Place : Bangalore

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PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public is hereby informed that my client is intending to purchase the below mentioned Schedule Property from its owner Viz., Dr. K. S. Vidhyashankar. If anybody is having any objections, claim, interest, dispute for the above intended sale transaction, he/she/they may contact the undersigned with the documentary proof substantiating his/her/their objections/claims/details of dispute/s within Seven (7) days from the date of this publication. Failing which my client will proceed to complete the sale transaction with the above owner as if there are no third party claims/objections /disputes in respect of the Schedule Property and thereafter no claims/ objections /disputes will be entertained.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All the piece and parcel of the Agricultural land bearing New Survey No. 60/5, Old Survey No. 60, measuring an extent of 3 Acres 30 Guntas, situated at Gottamaranahalli Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore District and bounded on: **East by :** Land in Survey No 60/6.
West by : Land in Survey No 60/4.
North by : Gulimangala Village Gadi.
South by : Road.

PRAVEENA S ADVOCATE
No.22, 2nd Floor, Papanna Building, Opp. Sub-Register Office, Begur Main Road, Begur, Bengaluru 560068.
Mob:9353004466/9886077827

BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL BENGALURU BENCH AT BENGALURU

In the Matter of the Companies Act, 2013
And
In the Matter of Scheme of Amalgamation of
CONTROL TECHNIQUES INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED with **NIDEC INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED**
and their Respective Shareholders

CA (CAA) NO. 03 /BB/ 2024

CONTROL TECHNIQUES INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED
(CIN: U30006KA1993PTC175731)
Registered Office:
No. 45 Nagarur Hoskur Road
Off Tumkur Road
Huskur,Nelamangala
Bengaluru Rural - 562 123
...**APPLICANT COMPANY NO. 1 / TRANSFEROR COMPANY**

NIDEC INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED
(CIN: U31101KA2000PTC026953)
Registered Office:
No.45, Nagarur
Huskur Road, Off Tumkur Road
Bengaluru - 562 123
...**APPLICANT COMPANY NO. 2 / TRANSFEREE COMPANY**

NOTICE REGARDING DISPENSATION OF MEETINGS OF THE SHAREHOLDERS AND CREDITORS OF THE APPLICANT COMPANIES

Notice is hereby given that by an order dated 24.04.2024, the Bengaluru Bench of the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal has dispensed with convening of the meetings of the Shareholders and Unsecured Creditors of the Applicant Companies, for approving the Scheme of Amalgamation of Control Techniques India Private Limited with NIDEC Industrial Automation India Private Limited. The Applicant Companies do not have any Secured Creditors. Any party aggrieved by this Order is entitled to file Miscellaneous Application in the instant Company Application. Further the Applicant Companies are permitted to file necessary Company Petition for sanctioning the Scheme of Amalgamation.

Date: 06-05-2024
Place: Bengaluru

SAJI P JOHN
SPJ Legal, Advocates
Unit No. 306, 3rd Floor, #30
Prestige Meridian II,MG Road
Bengaluru – 560 001
Ph: +91 98452 09798
Email:saji@spjlegal.com

omfed www.omfed.com
The Odisha State Co-operative Milk Producers' Federation Limited
D-2, Sahid Nagar , Bhubaneswar-751007
PH NO. : 0674-2546030,2540273,2540417,2540974
E-mail ID: dairyoperation@omfed.com

CAD-95 **NOTICE INVITING TENDER** Date: 05.05.2024

OMFED invites sealed tender in separate envelope for technical bid and commercial bid from reputed manufacturer of milk powder for conversion of Skimmed milk/Whole milk to Skimmed Milk Powder & Ghee. The tender document shall be available in the (https://tendersodisha.gov.in) website from **dt.06.05.2024 to 28.05.2024** up to 02.00 P.M for online bidding. Interested bidders may down load the Tender Document from OMFED website www.omfed.com for reference. The tender cost of Rs. 6,000/-+ 18% GST with E.M.D. of Rs.2.0 lakh, both shall be deposited through RTGS at OMFED. The bid without requisite Paper cost and EMD shall be rejected. The Technical bid shall be opened on dt.**28.05.2024** at **15.00 hours** in presence of interested bidders and the opening of the commercial bid shall be intimated later. For details please visit OMFED website **www.omfed.com/ https://tendersodisha.gov.in.**
The corrigendum, if required, shall only be published in OMFED website but not in any other media/newspapers.
OMFED reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tender documents or part thereof without assigning any reason thereof.

OIPR- 06063/11/0003/2425 Sd/- Managing Director

kotak Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited
Corporate Identity No. L65110MH1985PLC038137
Registered Office : 27 BKC, C 27, G Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai – 400051
Branch Office : at Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd., Kotak House, 22, M. G. Road, Banglore-560 001

APPENDIX-IV-A [REFER PROVISO TO RULE 8(6)]

AUCTION CUM SALE NOTICE

Auction Cum Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6(2) & 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Properties/Property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Symbolic/Physical Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited,(Secured Creditor/Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited) will be Sold on **"AS IS WHERE IS", AS IS WHAT IS" and "WHATEVER THERE"** is for recovery of Bank dues of ₹.1,70,13,042.58 (Rupees: One Crore Seventy Lakhs Thirteen Thousand Forty Two and Paise Fifty Eight Only) due and payable to the Secured Creditor in addition to Interest, Costs and charges at contractual rate to the Secured Creditor from **(1) Mrs. Sumithra, W/o Late. Rajappa S # 1-63, Nagamangalam village & post, Denkanikotta Taluk, Krishnagiri District - 635113 As Legal Heir of Borrower Late Rajappa, (2) Mr. Hemanth Kumar**, S/o Late Rajappa.S No. 586, shivanna Layout, Kembathanahalli Post,Gottigere, Bangalore - 560 083... **(As Guarantor and Legal Heir Borrower of Late S.Rajappa)**, **(3) Mr. Harish Kumar** S/o Late Rajappa.S No.38, Sri Manjunatha Nilaya, 4th Cross, Jyothi Nagar, Gottigere BG Road Bangalore - 560 083... **(As Co-Borrower and Legal Heir of Borrower Late Rajappa.S.) (4) Mrs. Indumathi**, W/o Nethappa, No.11, Jawahar Nagar, Ward No. 6, Hosur Post & Taluk, Krishnagiri Dist – 635 109... **(As Guarantor and Legal Heir Borrower of Late S.Rajappa)**. Short description of Immovable Properties/Property with known encumbrances and certain terms of the sale:-

Loan Account No.	Name of the Borrower / Co-Borrower(s) /Guarantor (S)	Demand Notice Amount and Date	Reserve Price (RP)	EMD (10% of RP) and Last Date	Inspection Date & Time, Contact Person	Date of Auction & Time	Total Out Standing	Known Encumbrances, If Any,
406042030179	**Mr. Rajappa. S** Since deceased by his legal heirs **Mrs. Sumithra,/ Mr. Harish Kumar/ Mr. Hemanth Kumar / Mrs. Indumathi**	**Rs. 1,48,76,200.24 dt. 17.3.2022 and 17.5.2022**	Rs. 90,00,0000/-	Rs. 9,00,000/- (Rupees Nine Lakhs only) On or Before 13.06.2024 6 pm.	06.06.2024 Time: 10 am to 4 PM Contact Person: Meenakshi: 9886752365 Lokesh Hegde: 7019566719	14.06.2024 from 2pm to 5 pm Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. No.22, MG Road, Bangalore -560001	₹.1,70,13,042.58 (Rupees: One Crore, Seventy Lakhs Thirteen Thousand Forty Two and Paise Fifty Eight Only) as on 02.04.2024	Nil

Details of the Immovable Properties/ Property : Item No.1 All that piece and parcel of Residential property bearing Site No.17, Gramathana Khatha No.4834, Gottigere Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk. Bangalore-83 **East :** Road, **West:** Site No. 20, **North:** Site No. 18, **South:** Site No.16

The Auction will be conducted online through the Bank's approved Service provider M/s C1 India Private Limited, at their web Portal www.bankeauctions.com. The Authorised Officer shall have absolute discretion to cancel the e-auction at any point of time, without assigning any reason. For detailed terms and conditions of E-Auction sale tender document containing online e-auction Bid Form, Declaration etc, Please refer to the link provided in www.bankeauctions.com & https://auctions.kotak.com/properties/auction-notices/ and also may Contact Persons: Hariprasad K B: 7259183002, Meenakshi: 9886752365, Lokesh Hegde: 7019566719

Place : Bangalore
Date : 06-05-2024

For Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited,
Authorized Officer

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd) | CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792
Registered Office: - KRM Towers, 7th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai- 600031. Tel : +91 44 4564 4000 | Fax: +91 44 4564 4022

IDFC FIRST Bank

APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6) & 9(1)]
SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) & 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s), Co-Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) as per column (ii) that the below described immovable properties as per column (iii) mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 21-May-2024 as described hereunder, for the recovery of amount due to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd) from Borrower (s) and Co-Borrower (s) as per column (i).

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on IDFC FIRST Bank website i.e. **www.idfcfirstbank.com.**

S. NO	(i) Demand Notice Date and Amount	(ii) Name of Borrower (s), Co-Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s)	(iii) MORTGAGED PROPERTY ADDRESS	(iv) Reserve Price Amount	(v) EMD Amount	(vi) Date and Time of Auction	(vii) Date and Time of EMD Auction	(viii) Date and time of Inspection	(ix) Authorized Officer Name & Contact Number
1	INR 9338040.00/- Demand Notice dated: 01-Oct-2022	**Babulal Juharji & Anitha Devi**	All That Piece And Parcel Of Flat Bearing No. 206 On The First Floor Having Super Built Up Area Of 1433 Sq. Ft. With Three Bedrooms, A Kitchen, Inclusive Of Proportionate Share In Common Areas Along With One Covered Car Parking Space, The Apartement Building Known As "Advaitha" Constructed On Property/Land Bearing Bda No. 93/D, Present BBMP Katha No. 93/D, Situated At 2nd Main Road, 2nd Stage, Industrial Suburb, Rajajinagar Industrial Layout, Bangalore, And, Bounded As : Boundaries Of The Said Flat :- East: Passage & Ots,West: Set Back, North : Duct & Flat No. 205 & South: Duct & Flat No. 204 Boundaries Of The Property/Land :- East : Road, West : Private Property, North: Site No. 93/E & South: Site No. 93/C	**INR 9297900.00/-**	INR 929790.00/-	21-May-2024 11.00 AM to 1.00 PM	20-May-2024 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM	15-May-2024 10.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Name- Preeti Toshniwal Contact Number- 9694702013 Name - Mr.Samson Castelino Contact Number- 9663456354

Disclaimer: Please note that the said notice is issued for sale of immovable property only and IDFC FIRST Bank Limited has no right to sale of the movable assets, if any, present at the immovable property.

Sd/-
Authorized Officer
IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd)

Date: 06.05.2024

QuoteExpress **IF YOU'RE GOING THROUGH HELL, KEEP GOING** › WINSTON CHURCHILL

Irdai eyes sachetisation of insurance with Bima Vistaar plan

Insurance regulator is likely to price the all-in-one product—Bima Vistaar—that covers life, health, accident and property at a low premium of ₹1,500 per policy

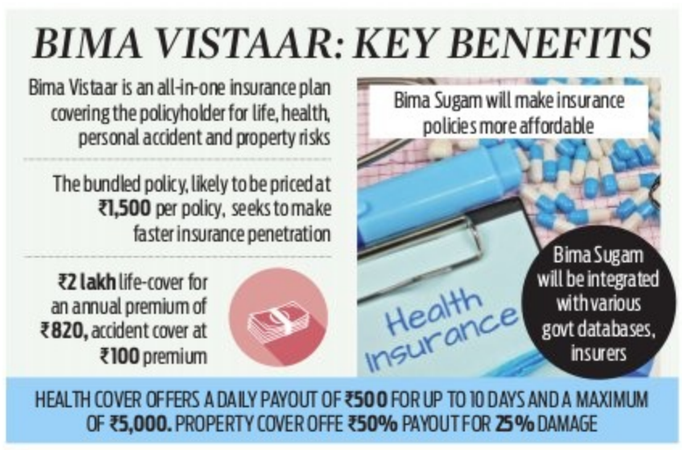
BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @Mumbai

IN a nation that's the world's fifth largest economy but has one of the lowest insurance penetration levels as low as 4% is nothing to write home about. But this may change if the regulator – Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (Irdai) has its way from a cost-benefit or economic perspective. Irdai chairman Debasish Panda calls this Bima Trinity or the UPI-moment of insurance, which in effect means sachetisation of all insurance products— life, health, property and personal accident covers--all at just ₹1,500 per policy.

The move to launch the first-of-its-kind all-in-one affordable insurance product comes in the backdrop of setting an ambitious goal of insurance for all by the time the nation turns 100 in 2047. The goal has been set given that the overall insurance penetration inched down to 4% in FY23 (figures for FY24 aren't yet officially out) from 4.2% in FY22, according to a Swiss Re-Sigma report. This is much below the global average of 6.8%. In the past two decades, the industry grew at over 16% despite prices heading south. The lowest penetration is in the general insurance sector at 1% but the industry is eyeing a 50% growth over this by 2030 to reach 1.5% of GDP. But when it comes to health insurance, it's much better at 37% or 514 million of the 1.4 billion people have medical insurance in 2021.

The Bima Trinity

The Irdai under Panda has been pushing the larger coverage objectives with the full support of the industry by co-creating regulations with the industry. The Bima Trinity includes Bima Sugam which is the protocol or the digital platform, the Bima Vistaar which is the bundled product covering life, health, causality and property; and the Bima Vahak which is the women-centric distribution channel. The press note on Bima Sugam-Insurance Electronic Marketplace Regulations 2024 issued in March this year, says the aim is to establish a digital public infrastructure named Bima Sugam to help universalize and democratize insurance as well as to empower and safeguard policyholders' interests with the final objective of achieving the vision of 'insurance for all by 2047.' The key cog in the wheel is Bima Sugam which is like an e-commerce platform where insurance companies can sell their products. If Panda's plan fructifies, Bima Sugam will be an online insurance marketplace for buying, selling, and servicing insurance policies as well as settling claims. "This marketplace serves as a one-stop solution for all insurance stakeholders, including customers, insurers, intermediaries, and agents, thereby, promoting transparency, efficiency, and collaboration across the entire insurance value chain," is how the Irdai puts it. At a recent summit of insurance heads in Hyderabad, the Irdai proposed to price Bima Vistaar, its ambitious mass product aimed at the rural markets, at ₹1,500 per policy. It is designed to provide a basic social safety net cover with combined features of life, health, personal accident and property insurances.



Attractive pricing

If the Irdai has it way, (the pricing is not officially announced yet) a life cover under Bima Vistaar will come at an annual premium of ₹820; mediclaim at ₹500; personal accident cover at ₹100; and property insurance as low as ₹80 per annum. If one takes the policy for the entire family on a floater basis, the premium will be printed in at ₹ 2,420, along with an additional ₹900 for the rest of the family members. Bima Vistaar offers a sum assured for life, personal accident and property covers at ₹2 lakh each, while the health cover gets one ₹500 per day for 10 days with an upper level cap of ₹5,000 which is available without producing bills/documents. The property cover offers 50% automatic payout if the damage is 25%, and if the damage is 40%, 100% settlement or a maximum of ₹2 lakh per policyholder.

Being a unified platform, Bima Sugam will be integrated with various government databases, insurers, intermediaries, insurance repositories etc, for fetching customer details, providing product information, and buying and servicing insurance policies.

No paperwork

Traditionally, buying insurance involves lengthy paperwork and one also needs to maintain those physical documents for renewals/claims. Some private sector players are offering digital services especially since the pandemic. But Bima Sugam just eliminates the paperwork and one can simply have the policy in the electronic format.

Affordability at the core

Bima Sugam is all set to make insurance policies more affordable by doing away with or sharply reducing the agency commissions by making insurers sell policies directly through this platform, leading to lower premium payout for the policyholders who are mostly villagers. The regulator has even proposed that an insurer can offer a discount on premium rates for policies purchased directly through the platform. The regulator has decided to make it popular among agents by offering them a 10% commission.

One single window

With Bima Sugam, one no longer needs to keep a tab of different policies separately but can access all the policies --life, health and non-life insurance—in one single window. One can also check policy details and renewal dates through Bima Sugam.

MONEY MATTERS

WHAT IS THE RETAIL BOND MARKET OPPORTUNITY

FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

RAJAS KELKAR

(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

IN a meeting last week, the board of the Securities and Exchange Board of India, the securities market regulator, said that it had approved amendments to the SEBI(issue of listing of NCD) Regulations 2021. The minimum face value of bonds issued through a non-convertible debenture or NCD offer is now reduced to ₹10,000 from ₹1,00,000 earlier.

For now, the corporate bond market in India is primarily institutional. Large financial institutions like insurance companies and mutual funds buy into corporate bonds through fixed-income funds they manage. The Sebi move allows you to use your broking account to buy bonds listed as securities for trading directly. These are non-convertible debentures that offer a coupon rate and trade for a market value based on the bond duration.

Now, you may wonder about the need to introduce it when barely 3-4% of people own financial assets in India, let alone trade and invest in the stock market. You may also wonder about bond duration, coupon rate, yield-to-maturity, and many more new words. The increase in the complexity level of financial markets would put you in a tizzy if you sit on the sidelines looking to invest like most people in the country.

Those who are into the market are surprisingly deep in it. India accounted for over 85% of the total equity index options contracts traded in 2023. According to data from FIA, a global trade organisation for futures, options, and centrally cleared derivatives markets, India's retail options trading volume has surged dramatically. It was revealed in the US recently that the US-based Jane's Street Group made $1bn in trading volume betting on Indian equity options.

EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

If you are new to investing, jumping into direct equity or derivative investing is hazardous. Many people follow the herd and invest without understanding where their money goes. A report by the Securities and Exchange Board of India published last year highlighted that 9 out of 10 traders lose money in the equity futures and options market. The dramatic surge in trading in equity index options shows that few are aware of the risks associated with trading in that segment.

Financial markets are way more sophisticated than you think. The Jane's Group story is an exception and not a norm. Knowing everything about finance is not easy if you do not belong to the sector. Even if you are familiar with the financial sector, you must know about the risks associated with every security that trades in the markets. Equity, bonds, commodities and derivatives markets collectively can offer you a variety of avenues to invest. For a country moving on the path of long-term high growth, a retail bond market can be a boon to you.

You may think that fixed-income markets like retail bond markets are a way forward. However, that also requires you to understand many things. The future inflation risk drives bond markets. That determines the trajectory of interest rates. Further to that is the element of credit risk. Governments top corporates issue bonds to mobilise long-term capital to fund growth. Corporate bond rates are typically higher than the sovereign bond rates. If there is a hint of a spike in the inflation rate, bond prices change dramatically. Short-term trading in bonds is fraught with interest rate risk and credit risk.

What can you do

You must look forward to the opportunity of investing in the bond market if you are already an equity investor. It is an excellent way to balance your investments. However, it is vital to arm yourself with knowledge. Investing without learning is like taking a shot in the dark. You will lose money and then never return to the capital market. If you are a regular investor in direct equities, you must read up about the new retail bond market opportunity. It would be a good idea to create a portfolio of top-rated bonds. Understanding the credit ratings will allow you to take the necessary call. If you are not regularly investing, you must talk to a professional advisor as a first step.

MONEY-WISE

FINANCIAL COMMUNICATION WITH PARTNER IS CRUCIAL

FINANCIAL ADVICE

PV SUBRAMANYAM

writes at www.subramoney.com and has authored the best seller 'Retire Rich - Invest ₹40 a day'

MONEY issues are one of the worst relationship spoilers in India – and is the leading cause of divorce! Here are top reasons why this happens!

Taking care of these will ensure that your family stays together. It is not only between the spouses, but the whole family and the extended family that will get the benefit of good financial communication.

- One person handles the finances and the other person does not participate –voluntarily or because of manipulation. One partner is the designated banker, taking care of all the investments, bills, and anything related to money, while the other did not participate! As a family, all adults should have an idea of their assets, liabilities, income and expenditure. Children should know whether the family can afford foreign education, vacation, etc.
- Not making a will – In case of death, the family has no clue about what assets are meant for what purpose. This is one of the biggest yet easiest to overlook money mistakes that couples make. If one (or both) passes away unexpectedly, not having a will in place can make life very difficult for the family members left behind. Dying without a will means the state decides what happens to your finances and possessions instead of you, and you can lose out on tax benefits.
- Not keeping a proper budget, and not keeping track of income and expenditure.
- Expecting 100% understanding of each other's money attitudes. This can never happen. Don't expect that all of you want to account for every rupee that you spend.
- Not having a financial plan –in fact this should be number one. A financial plan helps in a harmonious relationship. When you have a financial plan it's easy to see the full picture and manage lifestyle changes.
- Not talking about money at home – with spouse and kids. Financial communication is the best way to strengthen all relationships including financial. Talk about money to your family, regularly. As kids know where you stand financially, they will know what amounts of money you can spend on their wedding or education.
- Giving loans to siblings, cousins and friends without asking permission of the spouse: Men do this, but women are guilty too! When the husband wants to give a loan to his siblings, parents, or friends, he should let the wife deal with the amount and terms and conditions. When the wife wants to give a loan, it should be the husband's prerogative to decide on the terms.
- There are other money mistakes that families can make. For example, when one spouse decides that they will not contribute (or contribute much less than one's capability) the other spouse is hardly left with a choice!

These are some of the biggest mistakes that I have noticed, and I am sure many of you can add more!

However, if you know what you are doing...reading this will help you save your family life!

Indian Overseas Bank plans to sell 92 NPA loan accounts worth ₹13,500 cr

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @New Delhi

CHENNAI-BASED Indian Overseas Bank has planned to sell 92 NPAs loan accounts collectively amounting to an aggregate book outstanding of ₹ 13,471.68 crore. The Sale will happen on a portfolio basis in two lots through e-auction under the open auction method.

The first lot of auctions will have 46 accounts financed under consortium arrangements, 3 accounts under multiple banking arrangements, with the remaining 2 accounts being sole banking ventures. Furthermore, 38 accounts within the portfolio are formally admitted under the purview of NCLT. The second portfolio will have 41 sole banking accounts.

The Chennai-based bank has invited interested Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs) and other eligible buyers to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) by 13 May 2024, to participate in the forthcoming e-auction scheduled for 28 May 2024. Detailed information regarding the list of accounts and terms of sale can be accessed via the sale notification available on the bank's website.

Indian Overseas Bank in its concerted efforts towards reduction of NPA has embraced a multi-pronged approach to ensure maximum recovery in NPA accounts. This endeavour has yielded a notable decline in our Gross NPA (GNPA) levels, plummeting from 11.69% as of 31 March 2021, to 3.90% by 31 December 2023.

IOB has diligently implemented timely recovery measures, including SARFAESI actions, Compromise Settlement Schemes and sale to ARCs, resulting in enhanced recovery outcomes.

IT firms compete to grab digital transformation deals in BFSI vertical

UMA KANNAN @Bengaluru

FROM Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys to Tech Mahindra and Wipro, all IT services companies are competing to win digital transformation deals in the BFSI (Banking, financial services and insurance) vertical. Companies are seeing an opportunity in core banking and in payments space, among others. Though the vertical witnessed a slowdown in spending in the recent quarters, it has been slowly recovering.

Tech Mahindra new CEO Mohit Joshi in the recent earnings call spoke about the recovery that is happening in BFSI in FY25. "I do believe that the vertical overall will recover. From the Tech Mahindra perspective, we have certain unique pockets of strength, which is why I think we'll be a competent late-mover," he said. As part of its strategic roadmap, it wants to capitalise on late mover advantage and it targets high potential sub-verticals such as wealth management, asset management, core banking and payments. BFSI contributed 16.3% of the company's revenue in Q4FY24 compared to 15.5% in the previous quarter.

Infosys in March quarter inked 6 deals in BFSI space and it has a larger BFSI portfolio. The BFSI segment contributed 26.4% to the company's topline in the fourth quarter and it expects BFSI in FY25 to be better than FY24.

In Q4, the BFSI TCV (total contract value) for TCS was $4.1 billion. "For the BFSI vertical, 2023 was a year of resilience, balancing the challenges due to inflation and complex geopolitics against the initial benefits from rising interest rates," TCS CEO K Krithivasan said. "In 2024, while evolving regulation, transformative technologies like Gen AI, cybersecurity, embedded finance, and green transition have become the constant driving change, businesses are going to be focused on innovation driving their plans and building new business models for the future that will unravel tremendous growth potential," he added. TCS continues to see pent-up demand in BFS, which will be a growth driver in the medium to long term.

Wipro's Americas-II market unit grew 1.9% q-o-q on the back of strong performance in Capco, BFSI, Hi-Tech in Canada. The company said almost 60% of its revenues in this market comes from the BFSI sector.

FSSAI begins drive against all baby food cos to check compliance with norms

MONIKA YADAV @New Delhi

WITH regard to the recent controversy on excessive added sugar found in Nestle's flagship baby food 'Cerelac', the Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) said that it has launched an enforcement drive to investigate the samples of all the infant food products across the country to verify their compliance with the law.

"Appropriate actions/punitive measures will be taken against the FBO who will be found guilty and contravenes the provisions as specified under the FSS Act and rules/regulations made there under," FSSAI said in response to the media query via mail.

"The regulations inter alia stipulate the various sources of carbohydrates including sucrose/fructose that may be used in these products with a conditional prescribed threshold limit. As per sub-regulation 3(6) of the aforesaid regulation, 'Lactose and glucose polymers shall be the preferred carbohydrates for food for infant nutrition. Sucrose and/or fructose shall not be added, unless needed as a carbohydrate source, and provided the sum of these does not exceed 20% of total carbohydrate," the regulator said.

According to FSSAI, food business operators must comply with standards outlined in the FSS Act, 2006, at all stages of food production and distribution. The FSSAI conducts inspections, surveillance, and enforcement measures, including testing products.

Non-compliant operators face penalties as per the Act and regulations. The ban on Indian spice brands 'MDH' and 'Everest' in Singapore and Hong Kong has cast a spotlight on India's food regulator.

Swiatek clinches Madrid Open title

Top-ranked Iga Swiatek came through "the most intense and crazy final" she has ever contested to avenge her loss to Aryna Sabalenka in last year's Madrid final with a gruelling three-hour 11-minute victory in the Spanish capital. Coming back from 1-3 down in the decider and saving three match points in total, Swiatek claimed a 7-5, 4-6, 7-6 (7) win to secure the Madrid Open trophy.

LEFT, THE RIGHT WAY FOR SUPER KINGS

Left-arm spinners Jadeja and Santner come together to deliver a crucial victory for Chennai against Punjab Kings

GOMESH S @ Chennai

AT the halfway mark during the first innings between Chennai Super Kings and Punjab Kings, the scoreboard at the scenic HPCA Stadium, Dharamsala read — CSK 79/4. Super Kings had lost in-form opener and captain Ruturaj Gaikwad, spin-basher Shivam Dube, Daryl Mitchell and Ajinkya Rahane, with Ravindra Jadeja and Moeen Ali in the middle.

If all that is not enough, the news of Matheesha Pathirana's injury and his return to Sri Lanka came as a serious blow. With Deepak Chahar's injury already becoming a concern, they were in a tricky place. Chennai needed a win. But at that point, it seemed like they had no business winning the contest against Punjab.

And yet, about three hours later, the yellow team was all smiles. They had not just beaten, but convincingly outplayed the home side to secure a 28-run victory — which took them to third place in the points table (it could still change if Lucknow Super Giants beat Kolkata Knight Riders later in the evening). How did this turnaround happen? Two left-arm spin bowling all-rounders had a significant role to play — Jadeja and Mitchell Santner.

Teams	P	W	L	Pts	NRR
KKR	11	8	3	16	1.45
RR	10	8	2	16	0.62
CSK	11	6	5	12	0.7
SRH	10	6	4	12	0.07
LSG	11	6	5	12	-0.371
DC	11	5	6	10	-0.44
RCB	11	4	7	8	-0.04
PBKS	11	4	7	8	-0.18
GT	11	4	7	8	-1.32
MI	11	3	8	6	-0.35

* - until the end of LSG vs KKR match

Ravindra Jadeja and Mitchell Santner shared four wickets on Sunday | AP/SPORTZPICS

While his last ball four in the 2023 IPL final is etched in the history books, Jadeja's issues with the bat in the format is no secret. On Sunday, too, his struggle continued early in the innings. But in the 11th over, Jadeja cut loose. He first tonked Harshal Patel down the ground to the shorter boundary and then sliced him behind for another. With Moeen falling a couple of overs later, Jadeja was joined by the other left-arm spinner Santner. The New Zealander flicked Arshdeep Singh over short fine-leg to break free, but his cameo was short-lived. It was down to Shardul Thakur (MS Dhoni was held back) and Jadeja in the death overs. Thakur did his bit (17 off 11 balls) but Jadeja did more. He got down on one knee to slog sweep Rahul Chahar into the stands and then picked up a four and a six off Arshdeep in the final over. And he did it all despite both Thakur and Dhoni getting out in the penultimate over. Jadeja, too, fell — for 43 from 26 balls — but by that time he had put CSK in a safe position — 167/9 in 20 overs.

However, the job was only half done. Jadeja and Santner still had a role to play with the ball. Santner has been with CSK for the longest time but barely plays for them. Had he been with any other team, he would have been a regular. And what was preventing them from playing him is already having another world-class left-arm spinner in Jadeja.

On Sunday, they had little choice. With all the injury concerns, they were forced to play both Jadeja and Santner and the duo did not disappoint. With Tushar Deshpande setting up the defence by taking two early wickets, Gaikwad turned to the spin duo. Santner, in his first over after the powerplay got rid of Shashank Singh and Jadeja followed suit. He dismissed Prabhsimran Singh first, and then sent back Punjab stand-in skipper Sam Curran and Ashutosh Sharma in the same over. By the time Jadeja was done with his overs, Kings were down to 79/7. Together, Jadeja and Santner had taken four wickets for 30 runs in seven overs. From thereon, it was only a matter of time as Punjab scrapped their way to 139/9, falling short by 28 runs.

On a day when they had too many issues to address, forced to make changes in the playing XI, the two left-armers came together to set up the perfect win for Chennai. One should not be surprised if it becomes the beginning of something new with Jadeja and Santner taking the field regularly. **Brief scores:** CSK 167/9 in 20 ovs (Jadeja 43; Chahar 3/23, Harshal 3/24) **bt** PBKS 139/9 in 20 ovs (Prabhsimran 30, Shashank 27; Jadeja 3/20).

India women to begin 2024 T20 WC campaign vs NZ

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

INDIA will begin their 2024 Women's T20 World Cup campaign by taking on New Zealand in Sylhet, Bangladesh on October 4. England and South Africa will play the opening game of the global event a day before. The ten-team T20 event will be played in Dhaka and Sylhet with the summit clash scheduled for October 20. The fixtures were announced on Sunday in the presence of India captain Harmanpreet Kaur, Bangladesh skipper Nigar Sultana and Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina.

Harmanpreet Kaur (L) with Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina and Nigar Sultana (R), Bangladesh team captain | ICC

India, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Qualifier 1 are in Group A while South Africa, England, West Indies, hosts Bangladesh and Qualifier 2 are in Group B. Teams will play each other once with the top two teams from each group advancing to the semifinals to be played on October 17 and 18. After their opening fixture against New Zealand, India will play Pakistan on October 6, Qualifier 1 on October 9 and the defending champions Australia on October 13. Having finished runner-ups in 2020 and semifinalists in 2023, the women in blue will be looking to go all the way in familiar conditions.

INDIA FIXTURES	
Oct 4	India v New Zealand, Sylhet
Oct 6	India v Pakistan, Sylhet
Oct 9	India v Qualifier 1, Sylhet
Oct 13	India v Australia, Sylhet
Oct 17	First semifinal, Sylhet
Oct 18	Second semifinal, Dhaka
Oct 20	Final, Dhaka

As things stand, Scotland have already sealed their sport in main event, beating Ireland in the semfinal of the T20 World Cup Qualifiers on Sunday. The winner of Sri Lanka versus United Arab Emirates in the second semifinal will also make it to the T20 World Cup.

Group A: Australia, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, Qualifier 1
Group B: Bangladesh, South Africa, West Indies, England, Qualifier 2

Narine, the opener, lights up show yet again as Knight Riders go top of table

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

SUNIL NARINE has been a revelation with the blade this IPL season. After being re-installed as opener, he has taken apart bowlers at will to be among top scorers. That was evident in Lucknow on Sunday as the Kolkata Knight Riders opener dismantled the Lucknow Super Giants attack to help team post 98-run win. The win also took KKR to top of the IPL standings.

KKR opener Sunil Narine smashed 81 runs from 39 balls on Sunday | SPORTZPICS

With his propensity to dominate the short delivery, clearing the ropes at will in the process, he has left the bowlers' head scratching. LSG's Marcus Stoinis experienced that first-hand. Narine cleared the ropes three times, leaving the helpless Stoinis in dismay. The first one, Narine cleared his front leg before hitting it over long on. Following a dot ball, Stoinis went for slower delivery but Narine connected again to find the maximum. Narine made good use of the crease to make it worse for Stoinis in the final delivery.

Narine was finally undone by spinner Ravi Bishnoi, but not before scoring 81 off 39 deliveries. KKR lost their way for a brief period. Andre Russell (12 off 8 balls), Angkrish Raghuvanshi (32 off 26), Rinku Singh and Shreyas Iyer (23 off 15), all of them found it hard to get the boundaries. In the end, Ramandeep Singh (25 off 6) took the visiting side to 235/6 in 20 overs. In reply, LSG were in the game until their second wicket fell. KL Rahul and Marcus Stoinis were forging a promising partnership but just when they were looking to find a different gear, the former was dismissed by Harshit Rana. Deepak Hooda followed soon. Things went from bad to worse for the home side as Stoinis fell soon after making 36 off 21 balls. Then it was Nicholas Pooran who got out next. And with that, LSG's fate was sealed. end, the hosts fell way short of the target.

Brief scores: KKR 235/6 in 20 ovs (Narine 81; Naveen-ul-Haq 3/49) **bt** LSG 137 in 20 ovs (Stoinis 36; Varun 3/30, Harshit 3/24).

RUN FEST ON CARDS?

With Mumbai Indians taking on Sunrisers Hyderabad at Wankhede, a look...

BATTING POWERHOUSES

The last time these two teams went up against each other several records were broken. With this clash being played in Mumbai, could this be a repeat with another 250-plus total on cards?

BUMRAH VS HEAD

In Hyderabad, Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma played out Jasprit Bumrah while going after other bowlers in the powerplay. How the duo, especially Head approaches Bumrah could set the tone for the contest.

CAN SKY GET BACK INTO FORM?

Among other reasons, Suryakumar Yadav's poor run is one of the key factors in Mumbai's bad campaign so far. With the T20 World Cup coming up, not just MI, even the Indian team would want Yadav to get back amongst runs.

Mumbai Indians **vs** Sunrisers Hyderabad, Wankhede

Live on Star Sports and JioCinema, 7.30PM

EXPRESS READ

Indian trap shooters disappoint at WC

CHENNAI: None of the trap shooters from the country managed to get past the qualifying hurdle in the ISSF World Cup. Vivaan Kapoor missed out in the shoot-off, finishing seventh in the men's trap. Prithviraj Tondaiman finished 24th while quota winner Bhowneesh Mendiratta finished 39th. In the women's section Rajeshwari Kumar finished 23rd while Shreyasi Singh was ranked 29th. Manisha Keer finished 38th.

Golfer Sandhu finishes T-28 in Korea

SEOUL: Indian golfer SSP Chawrasia dropped four shots in the last three holes to finish T-37 while Ajeetesh Sandhu fared better to secure a T-28 result at the GS Caltex Maekyung Open here. Chawrasia bogeyed the 16th and the 18th and dropped a double bogey on Par-3 17th for a round of 75, after shooting 72-67-73 on the first three days. Meanwhile, Sandhu, who carded 71-71-74-69, finished T-28.

Enhanced Games chief makes startling claim

AGENCIES @ Sydney

BETWEEN 50 and 100 athletes set to compete at the Paris Olympics are "in the sign-up process" for the inaugural Enhanced Games, where doping will be allowed, the event's chief claims. Aron D'Souza, who founded the Enhanced Games in 2023 to boost athletes' incomes, made the declaration to News Corp newspapers in Australia on Sunday.

"We have a great many who are in the sign-up process at the moment, who are competing at (the) Paris (Olympics)," said D'Souza of his maiden Games, which are slated for 2025 with venue and broadcast negotiations "well-advanced". "I would hope 50-100 is (the number) of Paris Olympic alumni who would be competing at the first Games," he added, without specifying whether the sign-up process was a written contract or simply verbal interest "You will see at the Paris Olympics, some athletes are going to be very open about the Enhanced Games concept. We have quite a plan for the Paris Olympics." The Olympians would come from across the Enhanced Games' five core disciplines — swimming and diving, track and field, weightlifting, combat sports and gymnastics. Under its model, athletes would get a base salary with million-dollar bounties for world records.

They would not be subject to World Anti-Doping Agency rules with competitors able to use performance-enhancing drugs to achieve the feat — a concept met with disdain by the Olympic movement.

NADA suspends Bajrang, WFI fumes for not being kept in loop

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) handed Tokyo Games bronze medallist wrestler Bajrang Punia provisional suspension for refusing to give his sample for dope test during the selection trials held on March 10 and 11 to pick up the squad for Olympic Qualifiers.

Interestingly, the NADA did not inform the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) about the suspension. It instead intimated the now defunct ad-hoc committee headed by Bhupender Singh Bajwa making the WFI furious, which now has decided to seek an explanation from the NADA and inform the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) about the issue.

Bajrang, who spearheaded a protest against former WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh along with Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik, was handed provisional suspension on April 23 by the NADA and asked to send his reply by May 7 to avoid further disciplinary action.

The trials to pick the men's national team for the Asian Olympic Games Qualifiers in Bishkek were held in Sonepat on March 10. Bajrang had walked off the venue without providing his urine sample after losing his bout. He also did not take part in the bronze-medal play-off.

The multiple World Championships medallist in his defence asserted that he never refused to provide his sample to the NADA. "I want to clarify that I never refused to give my sample to NADA officials. I requested them to first answer me as to what action they took on the expired kit they brought to take my sample and then take my dope test," Bajrang wrote on X. "My lawyer Vidush

Singhania will reply to this letter," he wrote further.

Bajrang also posted a video wherein he displayed "expired kits" being sent for sample collection and asked the official why such kits were brought. It's an old video and the same was posted by Bajrang in the past as well. Meanwhile, WFI president Sanjay Kumar Singh came down heavily on the NADA for keeping the federation in the dark about Bajrang's suspension. "I am in regular touch with the NADA. Its team also collected samples during the Federation Cup held in Varanasi from March 24 to 26. I had a virtual meeting with the NADA Director General and other officials on April 25. Last month they also sought a long list comprising 29 wrestlers including Bajrang. A few days ago they sought the whereabouts of these wrestlers for this month," the WFI chief told this daily. Adding further, Sanjay Kumar said, "What if Bajrang had participated in the Federation Cup? We were not aware of his suspension then. I will write to the NADA to explain their reasoning for not keeping us in the loop. I will also write to the WADA to apprise them of the situation."

What makes the situation more complicated is the statement of Bajwa, who had led the ad-hoc committee. Talking to a news agency, he said, "I have got the mail checked. We have no such communication. We got an email on April 18 about a warning to Bajrang but the April 23 communication is not with us. I don't know to which email they sent it to."

Despite losing the trials, Bajrang is in the long list prepared for the Olympics. If he doesn't come out clean with his reply, he will be out of the race for the Paris Olympic Qualification. According to the WADA Code, "Refusing, or failing without compelling justification, to submit to sample collection after notification as authorized in applicable anti-doping rules or otherwise evading sample collection is an anti-doping rule violation."

The final qualifying event, the World Olympic Games Qualifier, is slated to be held in Istanbul, Turkey from May 9 to 12.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

PREMIER LEAGUE

Villa's top four bid rocked by 0-1 loss at Brighton

AGENCIES @ London

ASTON VILLA'S bid to finish in the Premier League's top four was rocked by a 1-0 defeat at Brighton, while Chelsea thrashed West Ham 5-0 to keep alive their hopes of European qualification on Sunday.

A Villa win combined with a Tottenham loss at Liverpool would have sealed a Champions League place for Unai Emery's side. But Villa were unable to fulfil their part of that equation as Joao Pedro's 87th minute goal condemned them to a second painful defeat in four days.

Chelsea's Cole Palmer (L) scores the team's first goal against West Ham | AFP

Villa remain in fourth place, seven points clear of fifth placed Tottenham, who have one game in hand. Emery's men host Liverpool and travel to Crystal Palace in their last two games. At Stamford Bridge, Chelsea crushed London rivals West Ham to move above Manchester United into seventh place. Later in the day, Liverpool beat Tottenham 4-2 at home.

China clinch Thomas & Uber Cup

AGENCIES @ Chengdu

CHINA completed a Thomas and Uber Cup double Sunday as both men's and women's teams beat Indonesia to win their respective world team championship finals in Chengdu. The men, who won 3-1, lifted China's first Thomas Cup since they beat Japan in 2018 — and their 11th in all. But it meant agony again for 14-time winners Indonesia, who lost their second successive final after falling to India two years ago.

In the women's event, Indonesia had earlier been powerless to prevent a flawless China lifting the Uber Cup for a record-extending 16th time with a 3-0 victory. The next most successful women's nation are Japan, who have won six times. He Bingjiao's 10-21, 21-15, 21-17 win against Ester Nurumi Tri Wardoyo completed a perfect 24-0 tournament match record for China's women. They regained the title they lost to South Korea two years ago.

In the night session, World No 2 Shi Yuqi got China's men off to a fast start by destroying seventh-ranked Anthony Ginting 21-17, 21-6. The pivotal moments came in the first doubles as Liang Weikeng and Wang Chang edged an epic to beat Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto 21-18, 17-21, 21-17. World No 3 Jonatan Christie gave Indonesia some hope when he beat sixth-ranked Li Shifeng 21-16, 15-21, 21-17. But Indonesia's chances were snuffed out when He Jiting and Ren Xiangyu beat Muhammad Shohibul Fikri and Bagas Maulana 21-11, 21-15 and seal the trophy.

UPCOMING EXAMINATIONS

TS EAPCET/EAMCET	NCHM JEE	CUET UG EXAM
Date: May 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, 2024	Date: May 11, 2024	Date: May 15 to 24, 2024

IPMAT: WHEN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION PEAKS

ARE YOU sure that you want to pursue Business Administration? Then the Integrated Programme for Management Aptitude Test, or IPMAT, an admission exam for the IPM programme, is a test you should appear for. Intense and insightful, the unique feature of the five-year IPM programme is the combined Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree it offers.

The exam scores for IPMAT are recognised by many Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and other management institutes, the leading IIMs among them being Indore, Rohtak, Ranchi, Bodh Gaya, and Jammu & Kashmir.

The Joint Integrated Programme for Management Aptitude Test (JIPMAT) is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for the IIMs Bodh Gaya and Jammu & Kashmir, whereas, IPMAT exams are conducted independently by Rohtak and Indore, while Ranchi accepts scores from IIM Indore. These tests are vital for those serious about management, they share similar exam structures while differing in difficulty.

These scores are accepted by various renowned business schools as well, alongside the Common Universities Entrance Test (CUET) and Common Law Admission Test (CLAT).

The demand for the integrated programme is seeing an upswing year-on-year, demonstrating its popularity. So, let's hear from directors of well-known IIMs about the details of the exam and the IPM programme.

IPMAT, abbreviated as Integrated Programme in Management Aptitude Test, is the entrance test to gain admission into IIMs for an integrated MBA programme. In separate interviews with directors of IIM Indore, Rohtak and Bodh Gaya, Harsha Tallapragada attempts to comprehend the tests

What makes IPMAT unique? IIM Indore director tells us

Five years can be a long time for students. So, what questions should you ask yourself before making the choice? Director IIM Indore Prof Himanshu Rai explains

What are the special features which make the IPM course one-of-a-kind?
IPM at IIM Indore stands out for its unique features like dual degree, diverse curriculum, innovative teaching methods, sabbatical leave option, financial assistance and more.

What kind of placement opportunities can students expect?
Transitioning from the IPM to PGP in the fourth and fifth years equips students with a comprehensive skill set, opening doors to diverse career opportunities across various sectors. IPM alumni are thriving in roles spanning consulting, consumer goods, and more.

Tell us about IPMAT 2024.
The exam will be conducted in multiple centres for nearly 28,500 candidates. Our processes are time-tested, and our delivery partner, TCS, has expertise in conducting several national-level exams.

IPM @ IIM INDORE BYTE-SIZED INFO

- **Launched:** 2011 • **Eligibility:** Class XII/Higher education at equivalent schools in India • **Exam date:** May 23, afternoon shift • **Intake seats:** **IPM:** 150 domestic + five international | **PGP:** 487 domestic and 10 International • **Selection process:** Aptitude Test followed by Written Ability Test (WA) & Personal Interview (PI) for shortlisted candidates of Aptitude Test

Any tips to prepare for the exam?
The exam syllabus does not require any special knowledge beyond Class X. The candidates can go through last year's question papers available on our website.

What are the questions students should ask themselves before enrolling for IPM?
Students should reflect on why they're drawn to management as a field of study and whether it aligns with their career aspirations. They should consider where they see themselves professionally and evaluate how IPM fits into that vision.

These strategies can help you crack IIM Rohtak's IPMAT

Why does IIM Rohtak conduct its own IPMAT? And what are the practical aspects of the IPM it offers? IIM Rohtak Director Prof Dheeraj P Sharma answers all questions

IPMAT is conducted by IIM Rohtak separately. Please explain why.
Many IIMs choose to administer their own tests for the IPM programme, allowing them to tailor the evaluation process to their specific requirements. IIM Rohtak's IPMAT is recognised for its rigour. The IPMAT by IIM Rohtak is rooted in providing a robust evaluation process and the broader objectives of quality education outlined in national policies.

Any strategies students should follow to crack IPMAT by IIM Rohtak?
Students should understand the exam pattern and syllabus; create a structured study plan, practice regularly and strategically, address weaknesses and maintain composure and confidence.

Could you introduce us to the practical aspects of this course?
Students pursue three internships as part of their BBA: Social Internship in first year; Industry Project in the second year and a Business Internship in the third year. These experiences are integrated into the curriculum, offering academic value and industry exposure.

What kind of placement opportunities can students expect after completing this course?
This year, the first IPM batch graduated, and they have had the opportunity to interact with 237 recruiters from different sectors. The highest salary package offered was ₹48.25 lakh per annum (LPA), with an average of ₹19.27 LPA. Students received over 40 pre-placement offers.

IPM @ IIM ROHTAK WHAT TO EXPECT

- **Launched:** 2019 • **Eligibility:** Min 60% in Class X/SSC and XII/HSC or equivalent examinations • **Exam date:** May 18, 9 am onwards • **Intake seats:** 165 • **Exam sections:** Quantitative Aptitude, Logical Reasoning, Verbal Ability. Shortlisted candidates will be called for Personal Interviews (PI)

IIM Bodh Gaya director on what makes a good manager

What qualities should aspiring managers aim to nurture? Director IIM Bodh Gaya Dr Vinita Singh Sahay says one must first willingly "embrace lifelong learning"

What makes IPM at IIM Bodh Gaya one-of-a-kind?
We prioritise experiential learning, industry collaborations, and mentorship initiatives to provide students with a comprehensive skill set that prepares them to excel in the ever-evolving business landscape.

The admission to the IPM programme at IIM Bodh Gaya is through JIPMAT (Joint IPM Admission Test) conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA). This year JIPMAT will be held at 78 centres in India and seven countries like the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia and so on.

IPM @ IIM GAGAN POINTS TO NOTE

- **Launched:** 2021 • **Eligibility:** Candidates of 10+2/XII/HSC examination • **Exam date:** June 6 • **Intake seats:** 120 • **Exam sections:** JIPMAT exam

JIPMAT is a joint entrance exam conducted by NTA. Could you please highlight the differences between JIPMAT and the other IPMAT conducted by IIM Indore?
JIPMAT offers a broader platform, even for students with Humanities and Liberal Arts/Humanities orientation, for aspiring managers. JIPMAT's emphasis on evaluating candidates' analytical, verbal, and quantitative abilities aligns with the multifaceted demands of the modern business environment.

What qualities should good managers cultivate?
Students who want to become managers should embrace lifelong learning, keep up with new developments in technology and trends, and develop a growth mindset that will enable them to adjust to changing conditions. Students should seek to uphold ethical leadership and social responsibility in their professional pursuits, as these are essential components of effective management.

LEARNINGS FROM THE EXPERTS

IN a detailed phone-in interview with EdexLive, Juhi Narula, MBA faculty from Physics Wallah and Ramnath Kanakadandi, Senior Course Director at T.I.M.E spoke about IPMAT in great detail, offered instructions to candidates to ace the exam and briefly discussed the preparation strategies

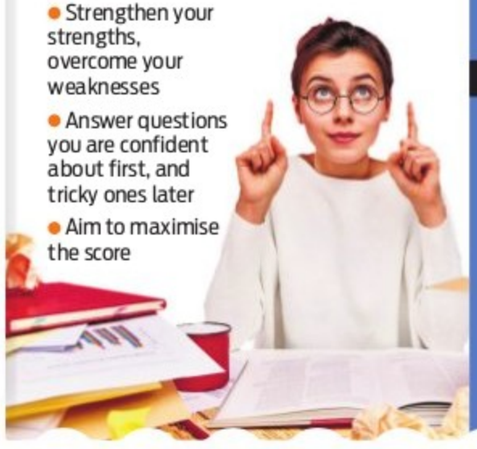
JUHI NARULA, MBA FACULTY, PHYSICS WALLAH	RAMNATH KANAKADANDI, SENIOR COURSE DIRECTOR, TRIUMPHANT INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT EDUCATION (T.I.M.E)
• Identify the test pattern	• Plan as per the calendar and adhere to it
• Know your fundamentals	• Stick to the preparation plan, do not deviate
• Practice the concepts (fundamentals)	• Focus more on quantitative aptitude for IIM Indore
• Attempt mock tests regularly	• Begin preparation early for more clarity
• Emphasis on analysing the preparation	• Answer easier questions followed by tougher ones
• Identify sections of strengths and weaknesses and prepare accordingly	• The goal should be to not leave any given question unanswered or blank
• Start preparation as early as possible	**FOR INTERVIEW ROUND**
• Prepare according to OOD (Order Of Difficulty) and prepare with concentration	• Mention how IPM will align with your career objectives to achieve your goals
• Effectively, spare time for preparation	• Clearly communicate
• During the exam, keep the rat nail intact	• Present ideas proficiently
• Don't be overwhelmed by the clock ticking	• Comprehend strengths, weaknesses, achievements, hobbies, extracurricular activities
• Communicate properly without stress during the interview	• Stay updated with current and world affairs
	• Be aware of politics, economy, socio-cultural aspect

WHAT TO DO, WHAT NOT TO DO

While the test requires some dedicated preparation and consistent betterment in performance, here are dos and don'ts that will stand you in good stead

Tips to crack IPM

- Start preparation early
- Prepare a realistic schedule and stick to it
- Strengthen your strengths, overcome your weaknesses
- Answer questions you are confident about first, and tricky ones later
- Aim to maximise the score



Dos

- Give as many mock tests as possible
- Invest time effectively rather than equally
- Analyse and re-work on subjects you are weak in
- Be ready with the necessary documents
- Forget mental pressure
- Trust the process

Don'ts

- Invest too much energy by focusing on results
- Risk leaving sections during preparation
- Panic during the exam
- Deviate from the preparation plan
- Waste time during holidays
- Overdo anything

STUDENTS & THEIR IPM JOURNEY

SHARING their inspiration to pursue IPM, students from IIM Indore, Rohtak and Bodh Gaya express their thoughts on the programme they are pursuing and how it aligns with their coveted career goals

ADRIJA MANDAL, Completed BBA, IIM Bodh Gaya

IPM is a crucial programme for holistic development, fostering essential skills like communication, analytical thinking and networking opportunities, offering rigorous academics, making it an ideal pathway for post-high school growth. It provided me with clear career direction, discipline, resilience, and real-life experiences like rural immersion in Bihar. I aspire to work in marketing after earning an MBA, transitioning into a marketing analyst manager and eventually, into a consultancy role. Also, if you want to ace the JIPMAT exam, you need to study hard, keep your cool, and be prepared with all the necessary mathematical formulas. Also, I would like to mention that it was my family's leadership experience that inspired me to pursue an MBA programme as it fosters holistic development.

SRISHTI CHOPRA, BBA second year, IIM Indore

It was a leap of faith, but I was assured of my decision to take up IPM after looking at the curriculum and other programme details. IPM is one of the best UG programmes in the country. The combination of academic rigour and holistic development opportunities that it offers is great for building one's personality and profile. The programme is designed in such a way that it allows you to study and experience different academic domains, and also prepares you for multiple career paths – be it entrepreneurship, academia, or conventional leadership roles. My advice to aspirants is to try everything! Prepare well and all the best to those taking the IPMAT exam this year. Also, IPM offers an exit option after the third year, for those looking to pursue something else after their UG degree.

VOX pop

L SHRUTI, BBA, IIM Rohtak | MBA final year, IIM Lucknow

I always wanted to enter the corporate world and management is what I have always wanted to pursue. IPM offered by IIM Indore has grown significantly in market demand, now provided by five IIMs and more colleges. This dynamic course, ensuring an MBA, eliminates the uncertainty associated with the Common Aptitude Test (CAT). Over three years of BBA, I studied 60+ subjects in various fields, including Math, Economics, Statistics, and foreign languages, incorporating team projects and class participation.

Aspirants, you should think about the reason why you want to pursue this course and as it is an academic-heavy course, students inclined towards learning should apply. Then, from the exam point of view, there's a focus on quants, English and logical reasoning. So, give mock tests and analyse them.

Where is IPM offered?

Besides IIMs, IPM course is offered by various universities and private institutions. Here is a listicle of a few institutes/universities along with the admission tests they accept and the fees they charge per annum

Name of institute/university	Tests accepted	Approx. Course fee per annum
IIM Indore	IPMAT	₹5 lakh
IIM Rohtak	IPMAT	₹5.88 lakh
IIM Ranchi	Takes scores of IPMAT by IIM Indore	₹5.3 lakh
IIM Bodh Gaya	JIPMAT by NTA	₹4.5 lakh
IIM J&K	JIPMAT by NTA	₹5.6 lakh
IIFT, Kakinada (AP)	IPMAT by IIM Indore	₹4 lakh
TAPMI, Karnataka	IPMAT/JIPMAT/JEE Mains/CLAT/MET/SAT	₹3.75 lakh
NALSAR University of Law	NMET (UG)/IPMAT (IIM Indore)	₹4.3 lakh
NIRMA	IPMAT	₹3.25 lakh
Jindal Global Business School	SAT/ACT/UGAT/CUET	₹4 to 4.5 lakh
NICMAR University	CUET UG/ AIMA UGAT/ NICMAR UG NCAT	₹2.8 lakh
NIIT University	NUAT/JEE-Main/BITSAT/SAT/CUET/NEET/IPMAT	₹2.7 lakh
JAGSoM Vijaybhoomi University	JAGMAT/NMAT/CAT/XAT/MAT/GMAT/CMAT/SNAP/MH-CET MBA	₹2 lakh
NMIMS	Personal Interview Round	₹4.4 lakh

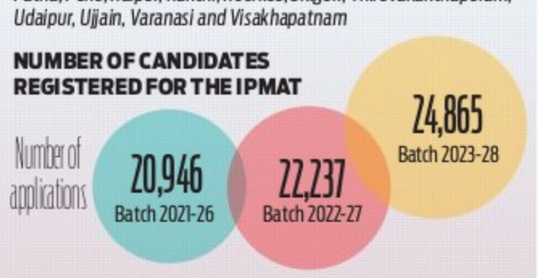
IPM REVELS IN ITS EVER-RISING DEMAND

According to the data shared by IIM Indore, the applications received in 2024 were 24,865 as against 20,946 in 2021

Candidates satisfying minimum eligibility criteria will be called for the Aptitude Test (AT) to be conducted across 36 cities (tentatively) in the country i.e.

Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh/ Mohali, Chennai, Dehradun, Delhi, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Gurugram, Guwahati, Gwalior, Hyderabad, Indore, Jabalpur, Jaipur, Kolkata, Kozhikode, Lucknow, Ludhiana, Meerut, Mumbai, Nagpur, Noida, Patna, Pune, Raipur, Ranchi, Roorkee, Siliguri, Thiruvananthapuram, Udaipur, Ujjain, Varanasi and Visakhapatnam

NUMBER OF CANDIDATES REGISTERED FOR THE IPMAT



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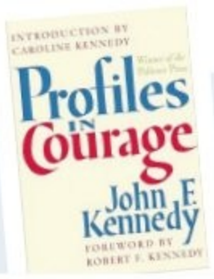
MONDAY



DAY'S DIARY

Pulitzer to JFK

In 1957, John F Kennedy won a Pulitzer for his book, *Profiles in Courage*, on the members of the US Senate, showing integrity in the face of opposition

BOOK SALE

The book picked up steam after the Pulitzer announcement. By June 6, Harper & Brothers, the book's publisher confirmed that, overall, one hundred thousand books were sold

BESTSELLING BOOK

Ted Sorensen had a critical role with the book as did Jackie Kennedy's Georgetown professor Jules Davids. Eventually, *Profiles in Courage* was a big bestseller

AS PRESIDENT

As the 35th President, John F Kennedy became one of the youngest US Presidents. He confronted Cold War tensions in Cuba, and Vietnam

CE's curated guide to happenings in the city

PG 2

FEARLESS FEATS

PICS: ALLEN EGENUSE J

THE vibrant Rambo Circus concluded on a high note at the St John's Auditorium on Sunday. The travelling circus was live from April 26 to May 5 in the city, marking a remarkable comeback. The show dazzled viewers with a medley of acts, including the daring flying trapeze and a visually-stunning aerial ring performance. A diverse troupe of 40 artistes from across the globe, including India, Russia, and Ethiopia, brought their unique talents to the stage, ensuring an entertainment-packed experience for all ages. The show will be travelling to other cities like Mangaluru, Chandigarh, Surat and Ludhiana for the rest of the month.

Field of dreams

As he preps for the upcoming Paris Olympics, Bengaluru-based hockey sensation Mohammed Raheel shares his training toward a podium finish, maintaining a high level of play in Australia and more

Mohammed Raheel at the India-Australia hockey Test series 2024 in April

DESE GOWDA

AS the Indian men's hockey team gears up for the upcoming Paris Olympics in July-August, Bengaluru's own **Mohammed Raheel** has emerged as a standout player. Born into a family steeped in the sport, the 27-year-old showcased a sensational performance against Australia last month, despite India's challenging 5-0 defeat. When we meet him at the Sports Authority of India (SAI), he steps aside for a quick chat from his intense training for the Olympics, now just a couple of months away.

Raheel credits his family's deep involvement in the sport for much of his success. "I come from a hockey family – my dad plays, and my brother has competed for the state team, participated in many nationals, and attended junior camps. Inspired by them, I began playing hockey in school," Raheel says, adding, "My family has passed down the spirit of competition and they have been a tremendous support. My parents are very involved; my dad watches all my games, as does my mom, especially the ones in Bengaluru. They make it a point to be there on the ground for the games. My dad was my first coach. From the age of five, I would go with him to the HAL sports ground to play hockey. As I started playing professionally for the SAI, I started to observe and learn from numerous former internationals who came to the ground. This made me passionate about the game."

While family provided a bedrock of support, figures like Dhanraj Pillay and Arjun Halappa were key influences on the young Raheel when he took up the sport professionally at the age of 15. "Pillay was my early idol, but I also watched Halappa play extensively," he adds. His mesmerising dribbling skills and the ability to maintain a high level of play, even under pressure, was notably evident during the challenging tour of Australia. "The last time I played for India was in 2022, and I hadn't had the opportunity to play 11-a-side since then. With whatever opportunities I get, my mindset is to do my best and that's exactly what I did in Australia," he says.

As the Olympics draw near, Raheel lays out his ambitions: "My personal goal, and the team's goal, is to achieve a podium finish. And for that I'd need to score as many goals as I can," he says with confidence. But with India placed in a challenging pool alongside teams like Belgium and Australia, the team has a mammoth task ahead of them. "We are focusing heavily on fitness and enhancing our defensive strategies. There's excellent bonding between everyone in the team, there's a positive atmosphere," Raheel adds.

CITY READ

Arts and crafts fair till May 12

A 10-day grand arts and crafts fair commenced at the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath on Kumarakrupa Road on Friday. The mela will go on till May 12. The main attraction of the fair are household items and decorative pieces. The exhibition-cum-sale was inaugurated by actor and model **Kavitha Gowda**. Speaking after the inauguration, Gowda said this mela has the potential to cater to different types of people as the variety and spread is large. "The specialty of the mela are the household items and decorative pieces manufactured by artisans from Kashmir to Kanyakumari which are on display under one roof. The items are sure to attract customers from far and wide."

Aslam Gafoor (@aslamgafoor) is a hospitality professional with experience in business development, sales and marketing with well-known hotels, and food and beverage companies. A few of his passions are travel, food and wine, and he enjoys sharing these experiences as a columnist.

GRUB HUB

THE QUIZ WILL BE PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

Send answers to **bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com** with the subject line **'Food quiz'** The correct answers and names of the first three respondents with right answers will be featured in *CE* on Monday. The first-prize winner will receive a voucher for a one-month subscription worth ₹3,000 from Suay- Asian Cafe**

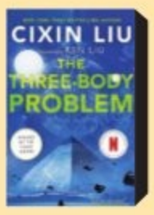
THE RIGHT ANSWERS

1) Ayran 2) Esquites 3) Agua Fresca

FIRST 3 TO GET IT RIGHT

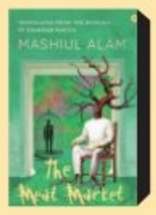
1) Rana S 2) Nikhil Siddheshwar 3) Greeshma Das

BOOK NOOK



The Three-Body Problem
By Liu Cixin

The novel revolves around a secret military project making first contact with an alien civilisation. As Earth makes contact, humanity is divided between welcoming and resisting the potential invasion, revealing profound philosophical and existential dilemmas about survival and progress.



The Meat Market: Ten Stories and a Novella
By Mashiul Alam

With themes of poverty, corruption, and human resilience, the narratives confront the struggles of individuals striving for dignity amid a relentless adversity in Bangladesh.

Woman, Life, Freedom
By Marjane Satrapi

Through graphic storytelling, the author portrays the struggles and triumphs of Iranian women against oppressive regimes. Her artwork and narrative captures the spirit of defiance and the ongoing fight for gender equality and human rights in Iran.

Djinns & Kings – The Curse Of Zoa
By Shabbeer Ahmed MS

The novel is set in an ancient, mystical world where powerful djinns and kings vie for supremacy. Witnessing their city, Afra-zun in ruins, the djinns are stuck in strife. As an unlikely protagonist – Rhuzbeh must travel through the djinn and human realm in an effort to bring the city back.

A THREAD

Bengalureans busy knitting during a workshop conducted by artist Tanishqa Rebello in Koramangala on Sunday | ALLEN EGENUSEJ

QUICKFIX

OATMEAL SMOOTHIE

INGREDIENTS
- **Rolled oats:** 1/2 cup
- **Banana (small) :** 1
- **Coconut mylk (unsweetened):** 1.5 cup
- **Lemon juice:** 1 tbsp
- **Vanilla extract (optional):** 1/2 tsp
- **Salt to taste**
- **Mango:** 3/4 cup
- **Pineapple:** 3/4 cup

METHOD
- Add oats to a blender, and blend to a fine powder.
- Add 2 ice cubes, banana, coconut mylk, lemon juice, vanilla and 1/8 tsp salt. Cover and blend again until smooth.
- Now, add the chopped mango and pineapple, cover and blend until smooth.
- Pour the smoothie into glasses and serve.

Contributed by **Chitra K**, Kozhikode

DR VIVEK ARORA

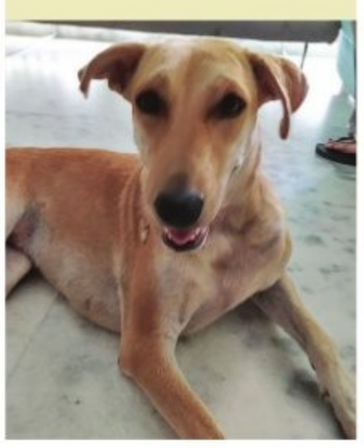
drvivekarora@hotmail.com

The expert is a senior veterinarian, Dr Gandhi's Pet Clinic, Delhi.

With summer upon us, can you suggest some cold beverages that can be given to my dog? She is 5, neutered, and a half-stray.

Dogs don't sweat, this makes them pant a lot. Considering the heat stress and incidents of heat stroke, it is highly advisable to change their outdoor activity timings to an hour when it's relatively cool. Early morning and late evening are preferred. Apart from that, keeping them hydrated is the other challenge pet owners need to address. There are several preferences for every dog. Some like curd/buttermilk, but as the pet in question is not keen on curd, pet owners can rely on chilled chicken soup, chicken soup ice cubes, paneer whey which can be chilled and served. Slices of water melon can be frozen and given. Apart from that, summer fruits like all melons, cucumber can also be given. Make sure clean drinking water is always available for your pet.

ASK AN XPERT



FITBIT

UTTHITA TRIKONASANA BLOCK

(EXTENDED TRIANGLE POSE BLOCK)

This is a variation of Extended Triangle Pose practiced with a block. Using a prop will make the pose accessible and easier to build stamina, flexibility, and stability, build endurance to take the practice deeper and to do the same pose without props. When you hold the posture for a longer period of time with ease, it creates a body-breath connection, which in turn activates and restores the mind and body connection.

STEPS
- Begin in Tadasana, widening the legs apart 3-4 feet.
- Inhale, gently turn your right foot 90 degrees outwards, and the left foot, 20 degrees inwards and make sure your right heel is in line with the inner arch of the left leg.
- Place a block near the pinky toe of your left foot. Ensure that the block is in line and close to the foot.
- Exhale, raise your arms at shoulder level, parallel to the floor, and with the palms facing down. Keep your body straight.
- Inhale, bend the upper body to the right.
- Exhale, place your palm flat on the block. Simultaneously, extend the right arm up to the ceiling.
- Straighten your torso to feel the stretch. Stay here for a deep breath to attain sthirata.
- Inhale, look up at your fingers. Ensure the upper body is closer to the right thighs and not bending forward.
- Pay attention to your back foot and remain here for 6 deep breaths.
- To release, inhale, gaze down, and press the soles of both feet firmly and bring yourself back up.
- Exhale, bring your hands to the waist, turn both toes and come into Utthita Tadasana.
- Repeat the pose on the other side (left), following the above instructions.
- Finally, come back to Tadasana Palms Facing Forward pose and relax.

BENEFITS
- Block, used as prop, helps learn and understand alignment, makes deeper connections with the body and aids in focusing more on breathing.
- Helps hold any pose for a longer period of time with ease.
- Opens the groin, hips, quads, hamstrings and psoas deeper.
- Makes it easier for chest, arms, and shoulders to practice challenging poses.
- Builds awareness in the body, establishes body-breath connection and have full control over the body and mind.
- Helps stay in meditation for longer hours with sthiram and sukham.
- Impacts the lower back and hips to the maximum.
- Helpful to heal lower back pain.
- Helps with the recovery of a knee injury, provided performed under a yoga teacher's guidance.
- Strengthens the legs and stretches the groin, hamstrings, and psoas.
- Acts as a preparatory pose for poses like Revolved Triangle Pose and Parsva Upavistha Konasana.

LIMITATIONS
- People suffering from BP, migraine, dizziness, or vertigo, have a weak digestive system, are advised to move from one step to another slowly.
- Individuals with injuries at the lower back, hamstrings, neck, or shoulders, should avoid this.
- Using a prop makes this pose accessible for practitioners of all levels and age.

By N Elumalai, PhD Scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

EXPRESS CONNECT

HAVE A RECIPE OR ART WORK TO SHARE, OR A QUESTION TO ASK?

@XpressBengaluru/@tniefeatures
bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com
@xpress_bengaluru

WHATWHENWHYWHERE

Soulful Melodies

Indulge in a night of soul-stirring melodies as award-winning artiste **Sooraj Santhosh**, along with an ensemble of talented artistes, performs a captivating set from their multi-genre, multi-lingual album, The Gypsy Sun.

WHEN: May 11, 8.30pm
WHERE: Gilly's Redefined, Koramangala
DETAILS: insider.in

Sing & Relax

Unleash your inner singer at this karaoke night featuring Bengaluru's Karaoke jockey Naveen. Whether you're a seasoned performer or a shower singer, share your passion with fellow music lovers.

WHEN: May 8, 8.30pm
WHERE: Hard Rock Cafe, Ashok Nagar
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Biker's Paradise

Embrace the thrill of an early morning bike ride to Nandi Hills and enjoy breathtaking views while escaping the city's bustle. Get ready for an adventure that combines nature, exercise, and stunning scenery! Breakfast and travel expenses included. **WHEN:** May 12, 5am **WHERE:** Pick up point: Marathahalli **DETAILS:** bookmyshow.com

Theatre Time

Watch *Sarasa Virasa Samarasa*, an avant-garde production of *The Taming of the Shrew*! Witness a contemporary reinterpretation with non-linear storytelling and innovative staging, exploring deep themes of gender dynamics and societal norms.

WHEN: May 7, 7.30pm
WHERE: Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Dance Fest

Calling all young, passionate dancers to join us at this dance festival. Explore and express your creativity through dance, whether classical or contemporary.

WHEN: May 9, 6pm
WHERE: Seva Sadan, Malleswaram
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Aroma Therapy

Dive into the art of candle making at this workshop where you will learn to craft scented candles, explore essential oils, and design your own candles to take home.

WHEN: May 9, 5pm
WHERE: Paint Cafe Studio, Whitefield
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Musical Night

Witness **Zafrir** as he blends multiple musical styles in a live DJ set where he also plays various instruments. Enjoy a unique performance from a world music innovator who has collaborated with top artistes like Afrojack and Armin Van Buuren.

WHEN: May 9, 6pm
WHERE: Pebble: The Jungle Lounge, Bellary Road
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Comedy Hour

Laugh along with Delhi-based standup comic **Madhur Virli** during an evening of humour and storytelling that promises to entertain and perhaps even inspire. **WHEN:** May 7, 8pm
WHERE: Ministry of Comedy, Koramangala
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

ARTCORNER

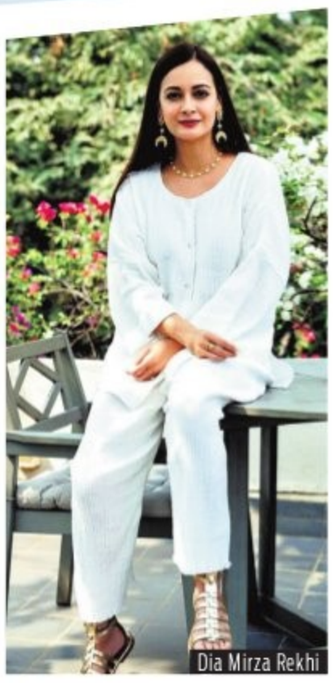
ONE WITH NATURE

Sushanta Guha's lithographs & aquatints offer critical commentaries on society and its future, inviting viewers to reflect on pressing issues

#O.O.T.D

Co-ords are becoming the heatwave's hottest trend. So we tell you how to pull-off an effortless look with a stylist's touch

Manvita Kamath


Dia Mirza Rekhi

Mira Rajput Kapoor

MONIKA MONALISA

WHEN in doubt go for a co-ord...that seems to be the new fashion mantra. The whole buzz around co-ords is quite understandable too. At a time when fashion has become extremely fluid with no rigid rules of colour coordination, sometimes it's nice to have a less complicated, single-colour ensemble: a co-ord set. While the set is fuss-free, there are many ways to glam it up and make it fun as their OOTD (Outfit of the Day for the uninitiated)

Breaking the monotone of white, blue and any earthy colours, socialite Ila Naidu made it fun with a bright pink jumpsuit. "It was lunch and I wanted it to be a bright pop with a summer feel. Adding further colours to contrast the pink, I paired it with my multi-colour bag and Louboutin heels," she says.

But if you are someone who loves to stick to classics, accessorising with jewellery is a good idea. Stylist Anugrah Samuel Phillip suggests some ways to glam up the co-ord in an understated way: If you are going for whites and minimalistic gold jewellery like hoops, don't hesitate to stack it up. But don't overdo it. Say, you are going for some earthy tones like brown, then pair it with accessories which are neutral so it does not overpower the subtlety of the colour."

As the heatwave continues to batter the city, co-ords are slowly making their way into office wardrobes too. Celebrity stylist Varshini Janakiram says it's not difficult to make co-ords into work wear. "People love the monotone styling for most occasions. Be it workwear, casual wear or even for traditional wear, people are styling it with the same colour, same fabric top to bottom," says Janakiram, further adding, "Fabric matters the most. If it's workwear, you get either a tweed or suit fabric. When it comes to a casual look, sets made out of linen are still the most comfortable. They can be found in almost all retail brands right now."

Vibrant floral prints or geometric patterns are the best match for your summer wardrobe. New York-based fashion stylist Nagashree Gururaj says, "Florals are good for summer and lift your mood immediately but if you don't style it well it might look slouchy and give a nightwear look. So make sure the hair is neatly done and accessorise it with a smart bag to avoid that overly casual look," says Gururaj.

This mango season, savour the essence of the 'King of Fruits' in a variety of delightful dishes

Mango mania

AAM DAL / TOKER DAL

INGREDIENTS

- Red masoor dal: 1.5 cups
- Raw mango (cut into long, thick strips): 1
- Salt and sugar to taste
- Turmeric powder
- Mustard oil
- Mustard seeds for tempering
- Red chilli: 1

METHOD

- Boil the red masoor dal with a couple of pieces of mango, salt, and turmeric powder.
- Keep the other mango slices aside.
- Heat mustard oil with the mustard seeds and red chilli in a wok temper.
- Add the remaining mango slices and let it soften.
- Next, pour the boiled dal.
- Adjust salt. Add sugar.
- The final dal should taste sweet and sour.

-JOYADRITA RAGAVENDRAN CHATTERJEE

MANGO RASAM

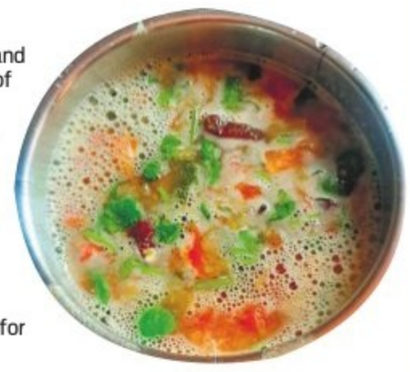
INGREDIENTS

- Raw mango: 1, medium size
- Toor dal: 1 small cup
- Tomato: 1
- Pepper: 1 spoon
- Cumin seeds: 1 spoon
- Green or red chillies: 2
- Crushed ginger: a small piece
- Coriander leaves

METHOD

- Pressure cook toor dal and raw mango with a pinch of turmeric on medium flame until two whistles.
- Once it's done, blend it into a smooth paste and add water if it's too thick.
- Add oil to a pan and add mustard, chilies, ginger, a pinch of asafoetida, and turmeric for tadka.
- Chop the tomato and add it to the tadka along with salt.
- After this is done, add the toor dal and raw mango paste.
- Once it comes to a boil, add pepper and cumin powder.
- Garnish with coriander generously.

-MALA SEKAR



AAM SONDESH

INGREDIENTS

- Ripe mango pulp: 1 cup
- Home-made cottage cheese/paneer: 300g
- Cardamom powder: A pinch
- Ghee

METHOD

- Take the cottage cheese on a plate and mash it for 10-12 minutes until it's smooth.
- Incorporate the mango pulp.
- Take a pan and add this mixture to it.
- Add in the cardamom powder and mix everything well until it all comes together and does not stick to the sides of the pan.
- Put the mixture on a plate and let it cool until you can touch it.
- Take small moulds and brush them with ghee.
- Tear off one small ball from the mixture and put it in a mould.

-JOYADRITA RAGAVENDRAN CHATTERJEE

GUTALI KI SABZI

INGREDIENTS

- Dry mango seeds: 4 or 5
- Oil: 2 tsp
- Mustard seeds: 1 tsp
- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
- Hing: 1/2 tsp
- Chilli powder: 2 tsp
- Turmeric powder: 1/2 tsp
- Coriander powder: 1.5 tsp
- Salt to taste
- Dry mango powder: 3/4 tsp

METHOD

- Dry the mango seeds under the sun for a week. When the upper part is well dried, break open the shell, pull out the inner seeds, and dry it under the sun again for a week.
- The pieces are very small; when dried well, we can store them for future use.
- To cook, soak the mango seeds in water overnight. Wash and bring them to a boil till tender. Let them cool.

- Add oil to a wok; when hot, add mustard seeds, cumin, and hing powder. Add the boiled seed and simmer cook for a few minutes chilli powder, turmeric powder, coriander powder, salt, and a little water.
- Finally, add dry mango powder for a tangy taste. Mix well, bring to a boil, and turn off the flame.

Note: It can be stored in the fridge for a few days. You can also add a few red chilies for taste.

-ANITHA B

CHANGE OF NAME

I, DHANALAKSHMI.M W/o Mohan Murthy, aged 36 years resident of Opp Rama Mandira, Hosadoddi, Manchanayakanahalli, Ramanagara, Karnantaka-562109 have changed my name from **DHANALAKSHMI to DHANALAKSHMI.M** vide Affidavit Dated 04-05-2024, sworn to before Notary Public Ka. Ha. Jagadish, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **D SUNITHA** also known as **DHARANIKOTA SUNITHA,** resident of #G4, Ground Floor, 1st Block, Vanshee Richfield Apartment, Marathahalli, Doddanekkundi, Bengaluru-560037, Karnataka, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **ORUGANTI SUNITHA** to **D SUNITHA** also known as **DHARANIKOTA SUNITHA,** vide affidavit dated 04.05.2024, sworn to before Ramachandrappa .C, Advocate & Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I Shwetha Kadambi Prabhu, W/o Kadambi Manjunath Prabhu, Residing at: No. 231, Phase I, Adarsh Palm Meadows, Varthur Road, Ramagondanahalli, Bangalore 560066 have changed my name as **SHWETHA PRABHU** vide Affidavit dated 15-04-2024 sworn before S. Nagaraja, Notary, Bangalore for all purposes.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **VANAJA G IYER,** also known as **VANAJA GOPAL IYER**, resident of #301, 4th Floor, Varshitha Paradise Devamatha Central School, Coconut Groove Layout, Horamavu, Bengaluru-560043, Karnataka, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **VANAJA JAIGANESH** to **VANAJA G IYER,** also known as **VANAJA GOPAL IYER** vide affidavit dated 04.05.2024, sworn to before Ramachandrappa .C, Advocate & Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, 658038K Ex Sgt **Sasi Krishna Panicker** (existing Name as per Service Documents), S/o. Krishna Panicker, Residing at No. 110, Chythanya MEG Layout, A Narayanpura, Bangalore North - 560 016, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **Sasi Krishna Panicker** (existing Name as per Service Documents) to **Sashi Krishnapanicker** (proposed / adapted New Name) vide affidavit dated 03.05.2024 sworn to before S. Nagaraja, Advocate & Notary Public (Govt. of Karnataka), Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **CHANDANA HERUR** (New Name), D/o. H.N. Ramesh, residing at No. 741, Siddhi, 15th Cross, 6th Phase J P Nagar, Bangalore-560078, Karnataka, India, that I have changed my name from **CHANDANA RAMESH** (Old Name) to **CHANDANA HERUR** (New Name), henceforth I shall be known and called **CHANDANA HERUR** (New Name) only for all purpose, vide Affidavit dated: 04/05/2024, before Notary H.S. DHARMAPRASAD, Bangalore.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS **CLASSIFIEDS**

PUBLIC NOTICE

CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME

I, (OLD NAME) GURAPPA RAJASHEKARAIAH KUPPUR, Residing at No.92,F-02,1st Floor, 3rd Cross, P and T Colony, RT Nagar Bangalore- 560032, have changed my name from **(OLD NAME) GURAPPA RAJASHEKARAIAH KUPPUR** to **(NEW NAME) GURAPPA KUPPUR RAJASHEKARAIAH** vide affidavit dated 03.05.2024 sworn before Notary B.S.Padma Prasad Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **ASHWINI SARODE** R/at No. 1343, 2nd Floor, 4th Main, 5th Cross, Behind Vinayaka Hospital, Chandralayout, Bangalore- 560040 have changed my minor son name from **PRAJWAL BHADANI** to **PRAJWAL TEJASWI** in the Hon BLE Court of the XIII city Civil and Sessions Court (CCH-13) At Bangalore **O.S.No.6343/2023**

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MOHAMMEDNAEEM ABDULRAZAK MOMIN, residing at#124, 2nd Cross, 18th Main, 6th Block, Koramangala, Bengaluru 560095, have changed my name to **MOHAMMEDNAEEM MOMIN** vide Affidavit Dated: 04/05/2024, sworn before Notary S.I.BALAGURU, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Mrs. Meena. S, W/o Mr. B.S Gopalakrishna, aged about 59 years, residing at # K-83/1, Sri Rama Dhama, 1st Floor, 4th Main, 9th Cross Lakshminarayanapuram VTC, Bangalore North, Bangalore 560021, have changed my name from **MEENA to MEENA S, S** is nothing but my surname name i.e, **SRINIVASU,** vide affidavit dated 4/5/2024 sworn to before B.Hanumantharaya advocate and notary Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **K.R. SRINIVASA MURTHY,** S/o Ramesh K.J, aged about 42 years, R/at No. 507, Architha Aithal Aarohi Apartment, 80 feet Road, near Jnanaskhi Vidyanikethan School, Rajarajeshwari nagar, Bengaluru South, Kenchanahalli, Bengaluru-560098, do hereby declare that I have changed my son's name from **ADYAAN ATHREYAS** to **ADHYAN S. ATHREYAS**, henceforth he shall be known and called as **ADHYAN S. ATHREYAS only for** all purposes, vide affidavit dated 11.01.2024, sworn before Advocate and Notary **ARUNA. V,** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Julie Jain,** W/o Late Bharath Kumar, aged about 45 years, residing at No. 9, Jain Temple Cross Road, opposite to Jain Temple, VV Puram, Bangalore South, PO Basavangudi, Bangalore-560004 hereby declare that my names **Julie Jain and Julie Bharath Jain** belongs to one and the same person, henceforth, I have decided to continue my name in future as **JULIE JAIN** vide affidavit dated 03-05-2024 sworn to before notary Bharati Patil, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Sri. Rakesh Kumar** S/o. Madan Raj Nahar, Aged about 47 years, Reside at No. E-506, 5th Floor, Parkwest Apartment, 1/1, Hosakere, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560 023, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **Rakesh Nahar** to **Rakesh Kumar** vide affidavit dated 04.05.2024 sworn to before Ravi Kumar .V, Advocate & Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, FAZLUNNISSA CHOTESAB born on 01-01-1943, R/s at #225, Muslim Buriela Ground, Farooqiya Nagar, Bengaluru - 560026, have changed my name as **FAZLUNNISA,** vide Affidavit dated 24-04-2024, before Advocate & Notary H S Sakalesh Aradhya, Bengaluru - 560040

CHANGE OF NAME

I, (OLD NAME) VEDAVATHI GURAPPA, Residing at No. 92,F-02,1st Floor, 3rd Cross, P and T Colony, RT Nagar Bangalore- 560032, have changed my name from **(OLD NAME) VEDAVATHI GURAPPA** to **(NEW NAME) VEDAVATHI KUPPUR CHANDRASHEKARARADHYA** vide affidavit dated 03.05.2024 sworn before Notary B.S.Padma Prasad Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Nikitha Ashish Aggarwal W/o. Ashish Aggarwal, aged about 31 years, R/at Siddhi Villa, 20/1, 6th Main, Sun City Layout, J. P. Nagar 7th Phase, Bangalore - 560 078, I have changed my minor daughter **Annika Ashish Aggarwal** (Old name) name as **TISHA JAIN** (New Name) vide affidavit dated 28.04.2024 sworn before Advocate & Notary B. S. Padma Prasad , Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SWETHA AJAY, W/o. Ajay Manish Raj M, residing at #3, Dr. Kuvempu Road, Ramaswamy Palya, Bengaluru 560033, have changed my name to **SWETHA ADURU NAGARAJU** vide Affidavit Dated: 04/05/2024, sworn before Notary S.I.BALAGURU, Bengaluru

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **ANASUYA MISHRA,** W/o Ashis Mishra, age 49 years, R/o Quarter No. 439, IIM Bangalore Campus, Banneraghatta Road, Bangalore-560 076 do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **ANASUYA BHATTACHARYA MISHRA** to **ANASUYA MISHRA,** henceforth I shall be known and called as **ANASUYA MISHRA** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 4th May 2024, sworn before Advocate and Notary **Aravind Patil G.G.** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **MANJUNATHA C M,** aged about 37 years, S/o Munishetty, residing at 2, Sy. No. 17/4, Madhuranagar, 1st stage, Janathamane bus stop, Varthur, Bangalore-560087. Hereby declare that, I have changed my minor Daughter's name from **'DYUTI M'** to **"PANCHAMI M",** vide Affidavit dated 04.05.2024 Sworn before Advocate and Notary Yankoba, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MD SAHID ALAM, S/O. MD FAKHRUL ISLAM Aged About 38 Years, Residing At # 09, 2nd Cross Bhimanna Layout LR Bande K.B. Sandra Bangalore North Post R.T. Nagar, Bangalore 560032, I declare that the these names **MD SAHID ALAM @ MOHAMMED SAHID ALAM @ MOHAMMED SHAHID ALAM @ MD SHAHID ALAM @ MD SAHID ALAM** now I changed my name to **MD SAHID ALAM**, one and the same person, vide affidavit dated 25-04-2024, Sworn before Advocate & Notary Smt. A. Manjula, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Sri Pradeep Kumar Todarwal,** Son of Sri. G. Dulichand Jain, Aged about 44 years, Residing at No. 39, 2nd Cross, Ashoknagar, B.S.K. 1st Stage, Bangalore - 560 050, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **Pradeep Todarwal** to **Pradeep Kumar Todarwal** vide affidavit dated 30.04.2024 sworn to before Jayappa .A, Advocate & Notary, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Mr. Y.H. PRATHAP,** age 48 years, S/o Sri P. Hanuma Reddy, R/at #65, 11th Main Road, BTM Layout 1st Stage, Opp. Water Tank, Bangalore-560 029 do hereby declare that I have changed my son's name from **SURAJ REDDY .Y.P** to **SURAJ P REDDY,** henceforth he shall be known and called as **SURAJ P REDDY** for all practical purposes, vide affidavit dated 09-08-2021, sworn before Advocate and Notary **JAYALINGAYYA MUDENOORMATH,** Bangalore.

NAME CONFIRMATION

I, **Suresh K K** S/o Kodihalli Shreekantaiah Krishna, residing at Hombanna, No 45, Indian Bank Road, Opp to Rainbow Children Pre-school, Avalahalli, Anjanapura post, J.P. Nagar 9h Phase, intend to use my name as **SURESH KRISHNA KODIHALLI.** Both the names are of one and the same person as executed vide affidavit dated 05/06/2023 sworn before Notary L.Puttaraju, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **SMT. PREETHA S DODDAMANI, D/o.** Late Shivaputrappa, W/o Satish D B., Aged about 48 years, resident of No.892, 1 st Floor,18 th Main, 5 th Block, Rajajinagara, Bangalore-560010.
I have changed my name from **"PREETHA DODDAMANI to PREETHA S DODDAMANI"**, for all purposes from today through an affidavit sworn before Advocate & Notary MANOHAR JEERIGE, Dated 02.05.2024, at Bangalore.

AFFIDAVIT

I, **MARYAN ARIFA** D/o Dr.Altaf Ahmed, age 28 years, R/at No. K 31, Sidde Gowda Street, Doddamavalli, Bangalore-560 004, do hereby declare that my correct name is **MARYAM ARIFA,** but in my passport it is wrongly mentioned as **MARIYAM ARIFA** instead of **MARYAM ARIFA,** vide affidavit dated 03-05-2024, sworn before Advocate and Notary **PUTTARAMAIAH** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **KHWAJA TAQIULLAH SHARIEFF,** S/o Noori Amina H, R/at No. 116, 1st Cross RK Garden, New BEL Road, Bangalore-560 054 do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **KHWAJA TAQIULLAH SHARIEFF** to **KHWAJA ABDUL HAMIED,** henceforth I shall be known and called as **KHWAJA ABDUL HAMIED** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 4-5-2024, sworn before Advocate and Notary **P.N. NAGESHA** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Mrs. JAYSHREE BENI PRASAD DATTA,** W/o Pankaj Pal, aged about 32 years, residing at Flat No. 212, Malibu BCM Jasmine, Near Sub Registrar office, Varthur, Bangalore-560087. Hereby declare that, I have changed my name from **'JAYSHREE BENI PRASAD DATTA'** to **"JAYSHREE DATTA PAL",** vide Affidavit dated 04.05.2024 Sworn before Advocate and Notary Yankoba, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **VIDHISHA RAMPRASAD,** resident of **442/5, Thathashree S Lingaiah Mansion, Subedar Palya, HMT Main Road, Yeshwanthapur, Bangalore North Bengaluru, Karnataka 560022,** have changed my name to **VIDHISHA R MAURYA** vide affidavit dated: 25.04.2024 before advocate and notary Smt. A. Manjula, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Sapna Pradeep Todarwal (Sapna P Todarwal),** W/o. Sri. Pradeep Kumar Todarwal, Aged about 43 years, Residing at No. 39, 2nd Cross, Ashoknagar, B.S.K. 1st Stage, Bangalore - 560 050, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **Sapna Todarwal** to **Sapna Pradeep Todarwal (Sapna P Todarwal)** vide affidavit dated 30.04.2024 sworn to before Jayappa .A, Advocate & Notary, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **(OLD NAME) SRISHTI SUNIL KUMAR**, aged about 21 years, D/o. SUNILL SETHHIYA, residing at # 309, 2nd Cross Road, Robertsonpet, K.G.F, Bangarapet Taluk, Kolar District 563122, Karnataka State, today camping at Bengaluru, have changed my name from **(OLD NAME) SRISHTI SUNIL KUMAR** to **(NEW NAME) SRISHTI SUNILL SETHIYA** vide affidavit dated 02.05.2024 sworn before Notary Meer Hassan Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Vadla Viswanathachari,** aged about 33 Years, S/o Vadla Rudrappachari, Residing At:- 2/2, B C Colony, Undabanda, Vidapankal, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh-515812. I have changed my name from **Vadla Viswanath (Old Name)** to **Vadla Viswanathachari (New Name),** vide affidavit dated **13.03.2024** sworn in before **T Narayanaswamy, B.A.L, LLB., Advocate & Notary Public, Govt of India,** Bangalore-562110.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **POONAM RATHORE,** R/o #2146, Casa Serenta Sobha City, Thanisandra Main Road, R.K. Hegde Nagar, Bangalore-560 077, Karnataka, India do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **POONAM RATHUR** to **POONAM RATHORE,** henceforth I shall be known and called as **POONAM RATHORE** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 3-5-2024, sworn before Advocate and Notary **PRAKASHA .C** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **VARADA,** aged about 35 years, S/o Sri. Varade Gowda, residing at No. 330/5, Kanakapura Main Road, 6th Block Jayanagar, VTC: Bangalore, PO: Banashankari IInd Stage, Bangalore South, Bengaluru-560 070. Hereby declare that, I have changed my name from **'VARADA'** to **"VARADA N.V",** vide Affidavit dated 04.05.2024 Sworn before Advocate and Notary R.S. Vijay, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **SIMRAN P SAKARIA,** C/o Sri. Jainam N Jain, aged about 27 years, residing at No. 1052 Surveyor Street, Near Cool Corner Hotel, Bangalore South, P O Basavangudi, Bangalore 560004 hereby declare that my names **SIMRAN, SIMRAN P and SIMRAN P SAKARIA** belongs to one and the same person, henceforth, I have decided to continue my name in future as **SIMRAN P SAKARIA** vide affidavit dated 03-05-2024 sworn to before notary Bharati Patil, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **SAYIDA MUBEEN,** W/o M. Mohammed Aslam, residing at # 1086, M.G. Road Cross, Near Jamiya Masjid, Upper Daira, Channapatna Town-562-160, Ramanagaram District, Karnataka State have changed my name to **SAYEEDA MUBEEN BANU** vide affidavit dated: 04.05.2024 before advocate and notary Vedavathi TD, Channapatna.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Sri Pradeep Kumar Todarwal,** Son of Sri. G. Dulichand Jain, Aged about 44 years, Residing at No. 39, 2nd Cross, Ashoknagar, B.S.K. 1st Stage, Bangalore - 560 050, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **Pradeep Todarwal** to **Pradeep Kumar Todarwal** vide affidavit dated 30.04.2024 sworn to before Jayappa .A, Advocate & Notary, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Mr. Y.H. PRATHAP,** age 48 years, S/o Sri P. Hanuma Reddy, R/at #65, 11th Main Road, BTM Layout 1st Stage, Opp. Water Tank, Bangalore-560 029 do hereby declare that I have changed my son's name from **SURAJ REDDY .Y.P** to **SURAJ P REDDY,** henceforth he shall be known and called as **SURAJ P REDDY** for all practical purposes, vide affidavit dated 09-08-2021, sworn before Advocate and Notary **JAYALINGAYYA MUDENOORMATH,** Bangalore.

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NAYANTHARA IN TALKS TO JOIN YASH'S TOXIC

With Kareena Kapoor exiting the project, director Geetu Mohandas is said to be in discussions with the Lady Superstar to get her on board

Yash

Nayanthara

A SHARADHAA

THE shooting for the multilingual film *Toxic* is expected to begin anytime soon. However, the speculations regarding the star-studded cast of the film are keeping the buzz around it alive. While Yash takes the lead, *Toxic* will feature Kiara Advani alongside the Rocking Star for the first time. Previously, we also broke the news regarding Kareena Kapoor Khan's exit from *Toxic* due to scheduling conflicts. Since then, there have been speculation regarding who will replace her in the film. According to the latest developments, director Geetu Mohandas is in talks with none other than Nayanthara for the role. Known as the Lady Superstar of the film industry, the director and actor are said to be in discussion. While there has been no official confirmation, the makers are said to be working on bringing Nayanthara on board. Once after talks are finalised and a green signal comes from the actor, an official announcement regarding her casting in the mega project will be made.

Toxic, currently in production and slated for a worldwide release in multiple languages, is an action thriller produced by KVN Productions. in collaboration with Yash's Monster Mind Creations. As of now, Shine Tom Chacko is the only other actor part of the ensemble cast. With Rajeev Ravi handling cinematography, the film will have Jeremy Stack scoring the music.

Ramesh Indira to play the antagonist in *Kotee*

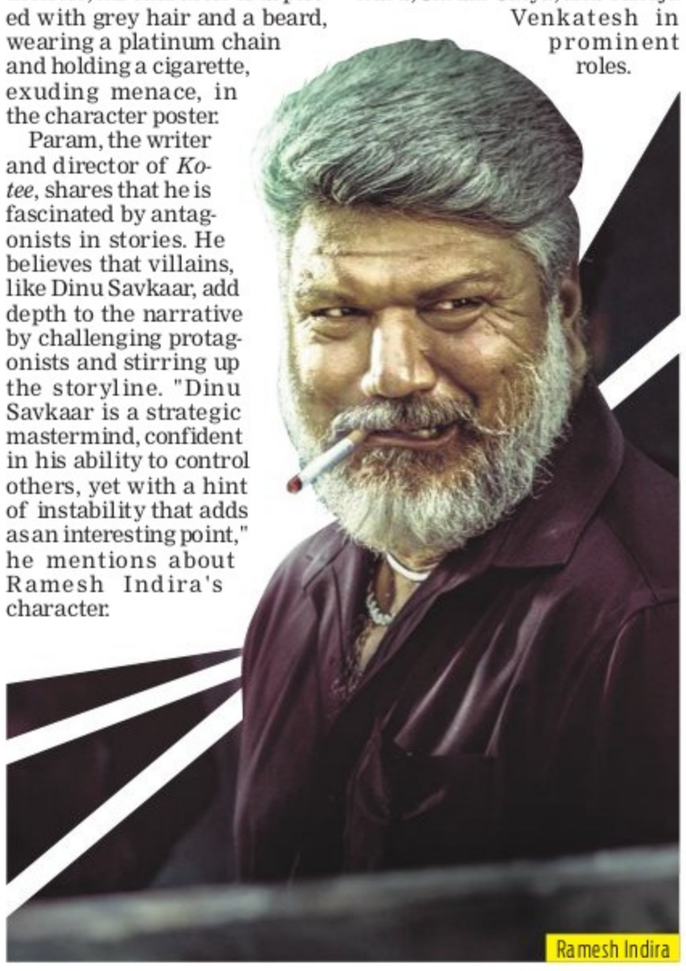
His character, Dinu Savkaar, is expected to face-off Dhananjay in Kotee which marks the directorial debut of Param

CE FEATURES

THE makers of Dhananjay-starrer *Kotee*, which marks the directorial debut of Param, previously confirmed that Ramesh Indira essays the role of the antagonist. The makers have now unveiled the actor's character poster from the film. The actor, who gained popularity for his role in *Sapta Sagaradaache Ello*, will portray a character named Dinu Savkaar in *Kotee*. Expected to face off Dhananjay in *Kotee*, his character is depicted with grey hair and a beard, wearing a platinum chain and holding a cigarette, exuding menace, in the character poster.

Param, the writer and director of *Kotee*, shares that he is fascinated by antagonists in stories. He believes that villains, like Dinu Savkaar, add depth to the narrative by challenging protagonists and stirring up the storyline. "Dinu Savkaar is a strategic mastermind, confident in his ability to control others, yet with a hint of instability that adds as an interesting point," he mentions about Ramesh Indira's character.

Kotee will be Jio Studios' first venture in Kannada and is set to hit theatres on June 14th. The film will feature music composed by Vasuki Vaibhav who has also penned the lyrics along with Yogaraj Bhat. The technical crew also consists of Nobin Paul in charge of background score, Prateek Shetty handling the edit and Arun Brahman cranking the camera. *Kotee* marks the debut of Moksha Kushal as the female lead and includes actors Rangayana Raghu, Tara, Prithvi Shamanuru, Sardar Satya, and Tanuja Venkatesh in prominent roles.



Ramesh Indira

Olivia, Jamie to headline *Takes One to Know One*

CE FEATURES

ACTORS Olivia Cooke and Jamie Bell have signed on to lead *Takes One to Know One*. Italian filmmaker Nathalie Biancheri, best known for Nocturnal, is directing the film. The upcoming film is described as an unconventional and contemporary take on romance.

The story follows Eleanor (Olivia Cooke) and Lucas (Jamie Bell). When the two meet in Rome, they are drawn to each other's passion for art, Italy and each other. However, they are both in relationships with other people. Caught between their growing feelings and their existing commitments, they must navigate the complexities of love and loyalty while exploring the potential for something life-changing between them.

Brooke Baker is writing the script for the film, which is all set to go into production in Italy later this year. Jamie Bell is known for his roles in *Billy Eliot*, *Jumper*, *Fantastic Four*, and *Rocketman*. Up next, he is set to star in *Fred and Ginger*. Olivia Cooke recently starred as Alicent Hightower in House of *The Dragon*, the second season of which is scheduled to release in June. The actor also has two new films, The Scurry and Visitations, which are in different stages of production.

LAHARI ACQUIRES AUDIO RIGHTS OF *ADHIPATRA*

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ADHIPATRA, which has recently wrapped up filming, is all set to hit the big screens soon. The makers have planned to release the teaser on May 10, and they are excited to announce that the noted music label Lahari has acquired the audio rights of the film for a good price.

Adhipatra will mark the Kannada debut of Tuluactor and Bigg Boss contestant Roopesh Shetty, and stars anchor turned actor, Jhanvi alongside the actor. Roopesh Shetty is set to essay the role of a cop in the upcoming film. The cast also includes Prakash K Thuminadu, Raghu Pandeshwar, MK Mata, Deepak Rai, Anil Uppal, and Prashanth as prominent characters. A suspense thriller, *Adhipatra* is directed by Chayan Shetty and produced by KAAR Cinikambai Productions.

Meanwhile, Roopesh is also making his Tamil debut, which is currently under production. He will be seen alongside Yogi Babu in the film.

Roopesh Shetty

'Gaming industry revenue far outweighs that of the film industry'

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PRODUCER Anand H Mugad is said to have conceived the concept for *Grey Games*, the upcoming film written and directed by Gangadhar Salimath, which is scheduled to hit big screens on May 10. Firstly, explaining the rationale behind the title, the producer asserts, "Even though gaming is enjoyed by people from all walks of life, regardless of where they come from, it's truly an international phenomenon. So, we decided to consider that aspect when choosing the title," explains Anand, who admits that he comes from the pre-computer era, and has always been curious about technology. "As software started to develop, gaming became a fascinating world for me. The graphics in modern gaming are so immersive and realistic that they transport players to virtual worlds. So, we pondered, what if a gamer could actually enter that world? And that's how the concept of *Grey Games* emerged, further brought out into a story by director Gangadhar Salimath," says Anand.

Describing the film as contemporary and highly relatable to the current generation, Anand adds, "It's a rare genre that hasn't been explored much before, and we're excited to offer something fresh to the audience." Produced under the banner of DEES Films, *Grey Games*' cinematography is handled by Varuna DK, with Doleshwar Raj, Ashwin Hemanth, and Shriyansh Shreeram contributing to the film's music.

Gangadhar, who has previously helmed projects like *Ayana* and has produced *Hosa Dinachari*, admits that introducing technology into a film, especially plunging into the metaverse and online gaming, was an exciting prospect. "As a computer science engineer, I found the concept of this film to be both novel and captivating," he shares, and adds, "The metaverse is essentially a parallel universe, a virtual world that has become a multi-million-dollar industry today, surpassing even the revenue generated by the film business."

Explaining how this theme influenced the film, he elaborates, "When I decided to consider working on the line given by producer Anand, I conducted extensive research and discovered the prevalence of online gaming-related crimes. I've observed numerous youngsters, including our assistant director, engrossed in online gaming, particularly games like PUBG. Instances of verbal abuse and even physical altercations stemming from these games are not uncommon. The revenue generated by the gaming industry far outweighs that of the film industry, making it a compelling topic to explore cinematically," he says.

Talking about the various actors, *Grey Games* features Vijay Raghavendra in the role of a counselor, with Jai (son of Vijay Raghavendra and Srimurali's elder sister) in his debut portraying the central character of a gamer. The film will see Sruthi Prakash portraying a celebrity, while Bhavana takes on the character of a cybercrime police officer. Adding to the ensemble cast is popular anchor and actor Aparna, making her comeback, playing a mother's character, along with Ishita and Ravi Bhat as part of the cast.

Anand Mugad and Gangadhar Salimath